University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training

2013

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CU Anschutz Medical Campus (2013)

- About 350 PhD graduate students and 350 postdocs
- GS was mainly involved in administrative tasks such as admissions and graduation
- There was a Postdoc office, but it was mainly HR
- Very few formalized career development opportunities
“The CU BEST Program enhanced the institutional awareness that student and postdoc training has to be broadened beyond just preparation for academic research in order to make trainees more competitive for science jobs both inside and outside academia.”
The BEST Program was structured along the academic cycle. Activities were offered to all trainees.

- Academic year starts with the **Graduate and Professional Skills (GPS) Orientation**. Includes mini-workshops on career options, IDPs, self-assessments, mentor/mentee relationships, emotional and mental health, critical and analytical thinking, etc.

- Academic year ends with a **Milestones of Success Celebration**. Peer mentor and Mentor awards, grants, publications, internship awards, 3-min thesis competition, etc.
What we did:
A. Created Skill Development Workshops
What we did:

B. Created Networking, Internships and Community Building Opportunities

- Sponsored seminars related to professional and career development such as:
  - Intellectual Property,
  - Personal Strength and Career Selection in the Biomedical Sciences,
  - From Biochemist to Consultant
  - Panel discussions with members of local industries.

- In 2014 set up an Annual Spring Mini-Symposium, “The Power of Informatics to Advance Health”

- Development of a Graduate Certificate in Biomedical Data Science

- Biotech Incubator and Tech Transfer internships

- International visiting scholars program
C. Training the trainers

Faculty members attended CU BEST workshops together with trainees, or workshops that were specifically designed for these mentors.
What we achieved:

- **Attitude and culture change**
  Increased awareness about the usefulness of and the need for career development

- **Created many valuable and successful career development opportunities**
  including workshops, symposia, networking opportunities, panel discussions, a graduate certificate program in biomedical data science and more

- **BESST Program Spin Offs**
  Trainees organizations such as the **Academic Industry Alliance (AIA)** that now organizes an annual **Industry Showcase** and an annual **Rocky Mountain Biotechnology Mini-Symposium** that has led to numerous cases of trainee employment.

- **The PhD Post** newsletter by and for graduate students and postdocs
Where we go from here:

• With an eye to the future, in 2016 we renamed the BEST program the BESST Program: Broadening Experiences in Scientific and Scholarly Training.

• This will allow us to transfer the successful program to a greater student body in the broader liberal arts arena
So far, four of the CU BESST workshops have been converted into credit bearing courses.

The Leadership & Team Building workshop will be continued by the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute.

The Center for Personalized Medicine continues the annual Mini-Symposium on The Power of Informatics to Advance Health, as well as the Graduate Certificate Program in Biomedical Data Science.

The Graduate School now has a Career Development Office that maintains and expands BESST Program offerings.