

## **Protocol 1042 Predoctoral Researchers Involvement**

**Protocol Number: 1042**

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### **Protocol**

GSSIMR encourages predoctoral researchers' involvement in the graduate school outside of their courses and research. The four main mechanisms for further involvement are:

1. Representatives on Committees
2. GSSIMR Ambassadors
3. Wednesday Gatherings
4. Co-Curricular Activities

**Representatives on Committees.** Four GSSIMR faculty committees and one GSSIMR committee have predoctoral researcher representatives. The Academic Progression and Assessment Committee, Admissions Committee, Curriculum Committee, Rotation Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee each have one or two predoctoral researchers serving on the committees. These committees meet on a regular basis to discuss the business of GSSIMR. The predoctoral researchers participate by providing input into the policies and procedures related to predoctoral researchers and the academic program, providing feedback regarding the curriculum, and participating in the planning activities of GSSIMR.

The goal is to have a broad representation of predoctoral researchers on GSSIMR committees and achieve a balance that includes gender, year in program, and background. Each appointment is for one year with the possibility of being reappointed for an additional year. In order to participate in committee service, predoctoral researchers must be between year three and year five of their graduate program. When committee positions are available for predoctoral researchers, the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs emails eligible predoctoral researchers. Predoctoral researchers then self-identify with their interest in an email reply. The Dean appoints predoctoral researchers to the committees.

**GSSIMR Ambassadors.** Predoctoral researchers have the opportunity to participate in the interview weeks by serving as ambassadors. This gives the current predoctoral researchers opportunities to meet and get to know the applicants. The ambassadors guide applicants to and from interviews, attend formal receptions and dinners, and interact with the applicants in informal settings. Feedback from the predoctoral researchers regarding the applicants is shared with the Admissions Committee prior to final selection.

**Wednesday Gatherings.** During the fall and spring terms, the predoctoral researchers have monthly gatherings in the late afternoon. In addition to its social function, this time is used to discuss governance issues, report on ongoing projects, and solicit feedback from the predoctoral researchers as needed. Topics in the past have included pay increase discussion, accreditation and certification updates, rotations, and use of social media.

**Co-Curricular Activities.** Co-curricular programs are learning activities that are essential to curricular activities and complement the formal curriculum. Programs identified as co-curricular align with and augment the curricular goals stated in the Core Competencies. These programs serve to enhance the academic program, are assessed with learning objectives based on the Core Competencies, and are not credit bearing.

#### *SIMR Lecture Series*

Predoctoral researchers are expected to attend the SIMR Lecture Series. The Lecture Series brings renowned scientists from around the world to SIMR to give talks about a variety of scientific topics. The advisor may require a predoctoral researcher to attend other seminars throughout the year. No credit units are offered for attending seminars.

#### *Science Club*

Predoctoral researchers are expected to attend a weekly Science Club where GSSIMR's predoctoral researchers and SIMR's junior scientists present their research. Predoctoral researchers are required to present at least one time (and preferably more) during their tenure in the lab. No credit units are offered for attending Science Club.

#### *Laboratory Safety, Radiation Safety, and Biosafety Level 2 Trainings (12 hours)*

These laboratory safety training sessions occur early in the program and consist of lectures and a tour. SIMR, while maintaining regulatory compliance with several federal, state and local agencies, has the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all individuals associated with SIMR and to minimize the environmental impact of performing basic medical research. These courses are designed to give predoctoral researchers the tools necessary to conduct science in a safe manner at SIMR by discussing the regulatory requirements of OSHA, EPA, MDNR, NRC, and other regulatory agencies and applying them to real research scenarios. No credit units are offered for these trainings.

#### *Research Integrity Course (9 weeks; 2 hours per day, 1 day per week)*

The course is required for all predoctoral researchers. The course lasts for nine weeks and meets weekly. Each course meeting is led by a panel of faculty and uses selected case studies to encourage practicing scientists to think about the principles of responsible conduct in research; to appreciate the devastating effect of scientific misconduct on public trust, institutional reputation, and individual careers; and to understand why at GSSIMR and SIMR there is zero tolerance for material deviation from commonly accepted standards for proposing, conducting, and reporting research. No credit is awarded for attending the course.

#### *Scientific Conferences and Courses*

Predoctoral researchers attend scientific conferences and courses domestically and around the world. Conferences and courses provide a wider platform to discuss and disseminate scientific findings and emerging techniques. In addition to bolstering the current research of predoctoral researchers, conferences and courses provide a

networking opportunity as predoctoral researchers meet leaders in their field from the US and around the world. GSSIMR provides funding for one conference or course per year to every predoctoral researcher. In addition, attendance to conferences and courses is funded by individual laboratory budgets and conference awards. No credit is awarded for attending or presenting at conferences or courses.

#### *GSSIMR Course Teaching Assistant*

Predocutorial researchers enrolled in the GSSIMR program can serve as a teaching assistant in GSSIMR module courses. Teaching assistants must participate in planning activities, assessment activities, and teaching components. However, teaching is not a requirement of the program, and no credit units are available for teaching.

#### *Crossroads Programs*

The Crossroads program at SIMR fosters a sense of community among predoctoral and postdoctoral researchers. Crossroads activities are organized by a volunteer committee and include a variety of career-related and professional development workshops covering skills such as funding and grantsmanship, oral presentation skills, and effective manuscript writing. The annual Young Investigator Science Retreat (YISR) is one of the major scientific and social events that Crossroads organizes. YISR provides predoctoral and postdoctoral researchers with the opportunity to present their research to their peers with oral and poster presentations and to socialize on an Institute-wide level. Crossroads also organizes career development workshops that provide career resources for predoctoral and postdoctoral researchers to help them reach the next stage of their careers.

#### *Data Clubs*

Predocutorial researchers organize weekly or biweekly meetings where they present their data or a recent journal publication to their fellow predoctoral researchers. Other researchers in the SIMR community whose work is relevant to the presenter can be invited to join. The meetings are informal and are designed to help support the GSSIMR predoctoral researchers' scientific progress and their community. No credit is awarded for presenting or attending the meetings.

#### *Supergroup Participation*

Groups of SIMR laboratories that have similar interests or are in similar fields often form a "Supergroup." The formation of these groups is spearheaded by the heads of the laboratories (the Principal Investigators) or other senior scientists. Currently, there is a Translational Research Seminar Supergroup, a Chromosome and Gene Expression Supergroup, a Developmental Biology Supergroup, and a Cell Division Supergroup. Predocutorial researchers in the relevant labs attend the meetings of the supergroups, which generally occur bi-monthly, and present their research and data. This is an opportunity for the predoctoral researchers to gain further experience presenting to colleagues, listening to and responding to questions and feedback, and communicating with audiences. No credit is awarded for presenting or attending the meetings.

### *Open Mic Science Club*

Predoctoral researchers organize, attend, and participate in a seminar series that occurs over the summer months. Predoctoral researchers and SIMR researchers present their work to their colleagues and get feedback from those in attendance. Like the Friday Science Club, which is suspended during the summers, Open Mic Science Club is an opportunity for predoctoral researchers to present to the wider SIMR community. No credit is awarded for presenting or attending the meetings.

### *In Balance Program*

Predoctoral researchers attend and participate in a series of programs that are focused on achieving and maintaining wellness. These programs are for personal and professional development in areas of finances, physical and mental health, parenting, and others. The programs are offered periodically through SIMR.