



University
of Rochester

Evolving Your Path: Building a Meaningful Clinician Educator Career

*Please log into your AI account
while you're waiting!*



By the end of this session, you'll be able to...

1. **Articulate your personal and professional values** as they relate to your career as a clinician educator.
2. **Apply design thinking principles and use AI** to identify at least three distinct career trajectories aligned with your values.
3. **Identify relevant resources and actionable next steps** to advance your chosen career paths.



Educator Activities

What **activities or roles** do you engage in as a clinician educator *currently*?



Educator Roles



Teaching



Assessment



Curriculum
Design



Mentorship/
Advising



Leadership



Administration

Course/Block/Program
Director /
Asst. Director

Course/Clerkship/Program
Director

Assistant/Associate/Vice
Dean/DIO/
Chair for Education

Big
Dean/DIO/
Chair/President

Education

Teaching, assessing, curriculum development, mentoring

Curriculum innovation,
Peer reviewer

Multi-institutional study,
Assoc. Editor

Perspectives,
Editor

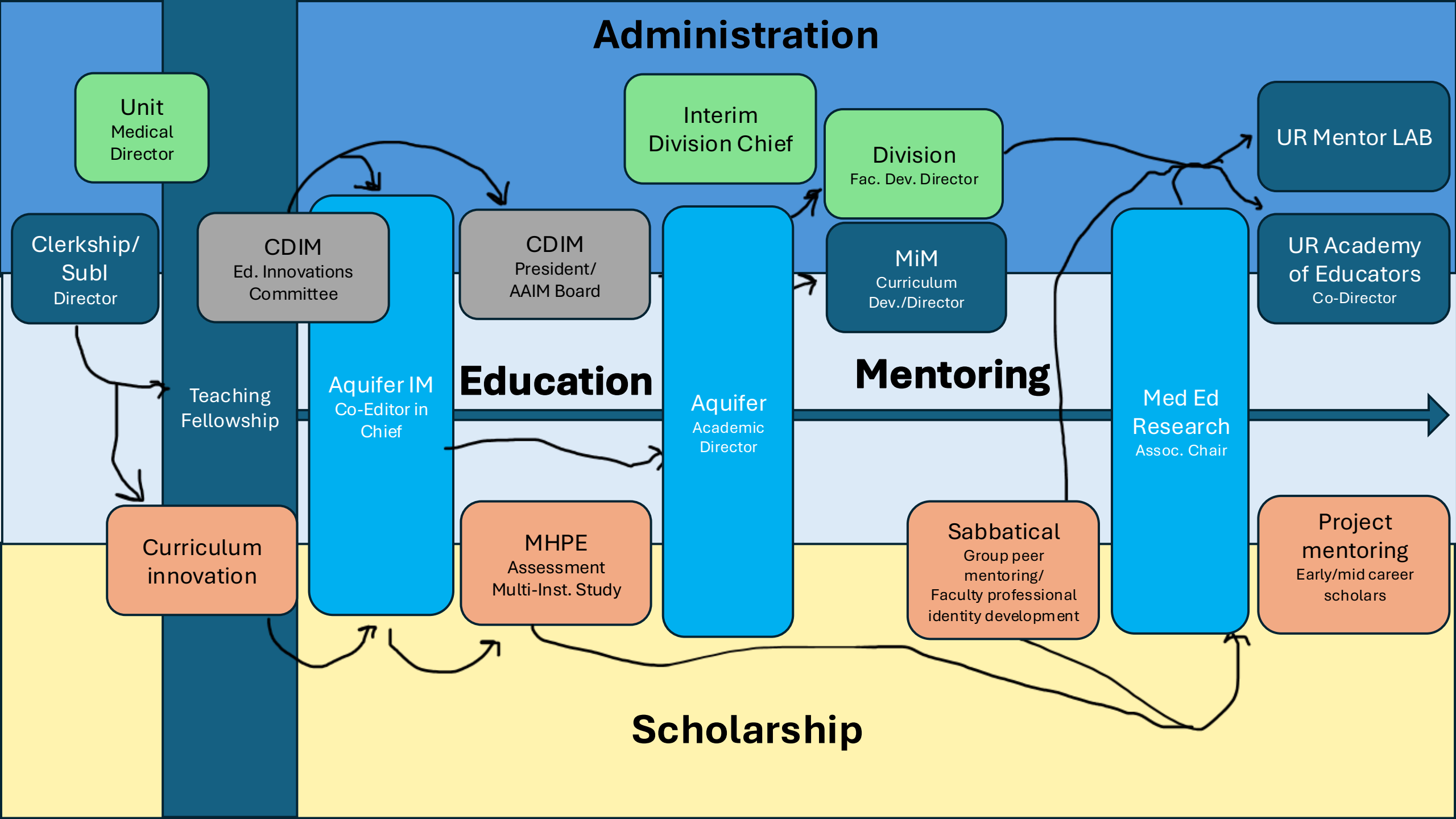
Scholarship



University
of Rochester

Evolving Your Path:

...the maps are kind of weird



The organizational chart for the Department of Family Medicine (DTF) is structured as follows:

- DTF (Department of Family Medicine)** (Central vertical bar)
 - Administration (Blue background)**
 - Unit Medical Director (Green box)
 - Clerkship/Subl Director (Dark blue box)
 - Interim Division Chief (Green box)
 - Division Fac. Dev. Director (Green box)
 - UR Mentor LAB (Dark blue box)
 - Education (Light blue background)**
 - CDIM Ed. Innovations Committee (Grey box)
 - Aquifer IM Co-Editor in Chief (Blue box)
 - CDIM President/AAIM Board (Grey box)
 - Mentoring (Light blue background)**
 - MiM Curriculum Dev./Director (Dark blue box)
 - Aquifer Academic Director (Blue box)
 - Med Ed Research Assoc. Chair (Blue box)
 - Scholarship (Yellow background)**
 - Curriculum innovation (Orange box)
 - MHPE Assessment Multi-Inst. Study (Orange box)
 - Sabbatical Group peer mentoring/Faculty professional identity development (Orange box)
 - Project mentoring Early/mid career scholars (Orange box)

Additional roles and committees shown in the chart include:

- UR Academy of Educators Co-Director (Dark blue box)
- UR Mentor LAB (Dark blue box)

Unit
Medical
Director

Clerkship/
Subl
Director

CDIM
Ed. Innovations
Committee

CDIM
President/
AAIM Board

Interim
Division Chief

Division
Fac. Dev. Director

MiM
Curriculum
Dev./Director

UR Mentor LAB

UR Academy
of Educators
Co-Director

The diagram illustrates the relationship between three concepts: DTF (Digital Technology Framework), Curriculum Innovation, and Ecological Education. DTF is shown in a light blue box, Curriculum Innovation in a light green box, and Ecological Education in a light orange box. Arrows indicate a flow from DTF to Curriculum Innovation, and from Curriculum Innovation to Ecological Education.

Aquifer IM
Co-Editor in Chief

Education

Aquifer
Academic
Director

Mentoring

Med Ed
Research
Assoc. Chair

Curriculum innovation

MHPE
Assessment
Multi-Inst. Study

Sabbatical
Group peer mentoring/
Faculty professional identity development

Project mentoring
Early/mid career scholars

Scholarship



Introduce yourself to your partner

Ground rules

- We will share our strengths, values, aspirations, and constraints.
- We invite active, respectful listening.
- The larger lessons leave with us, but the details stay in this room.



Your strengths as a **clinician educator**

What are **5 things** you're really good at?
This will make some of you uncomfortable.



Wandering paths: a natural consequence of our pluripotency

- **Education** is necessary (though insufficient) to accomplish anything important
- Patient **communication skills** are transferrable to educational settings
- **Leadership skills** apply to multiple different leadership roles



Values exercise

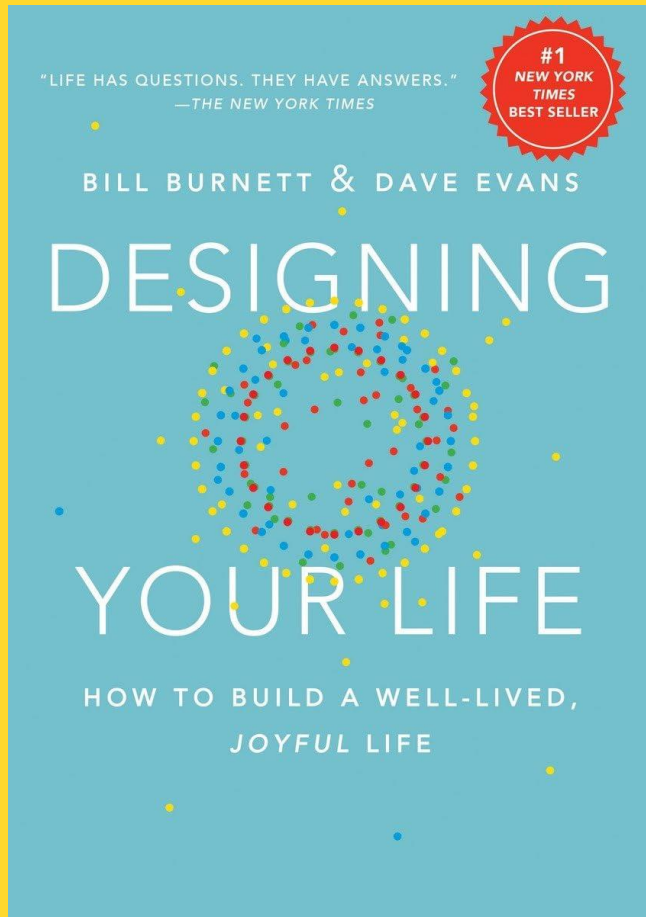
What values are most **meaningful** to you?

What values would you make **sacrifices** for?

- Choose 10 from the list
- You may write in your own
- Narrow it down to 5

Using Design Thinking to plan what's next

Design thinking



Burnett B, Evans D. Designing your life: how to make a well-lived, joyful life. Knopf. 2016.

Approach to complex problems

- **Empathy:** rooted in values, human experience
- **Iteration:** Not just one possible solution → prototype **three**
- **Experimentation:** okay to try, get quick feedback, adjust; failures expected
- Accepting **constraints** (e.g. gravity)

Application to career/life planning

Prototypes

Prototype 3 distinct career pathways.

For each pathway, provide:

- (1) specific role/ title
- (2) 3 key responsibilities
- (3) alignment with your stated values and strengths
- (4) one potential constraint



Ask AI: Use this prompt

I am a clinician educator in [field] at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.

My current role includes the following responsibilities: [list at least 5].

My values are [list at least 5 values].

My strengths are [list at least 5 strengths].

Please prototype 3 distinct career pathways that align with my values and strengths. For each pathway, provide:

- (1) specific role title,
- (2) 3 key responsibilities,
- (3) how it aligns with my stated values and strengths, and
- (4) one potential constraint.

Make the pathways different in scope and include at least one clinically-focused role, and one education-focused role.



How did AI compare to your own prototypes?

- Which AI-generated pathway most **surprised** you?
 - In what way?
- Which pathway **energizes** you most?
 - What does that reveal about your priorities?



Supporting your next steps

Identity development

Skill development & resources

Professional identity development

Metaphors

- Journey
- Fitting a mold
- **“Functional crafting”**







Mentor

Formal
Longitudinal
"Professional parenting"



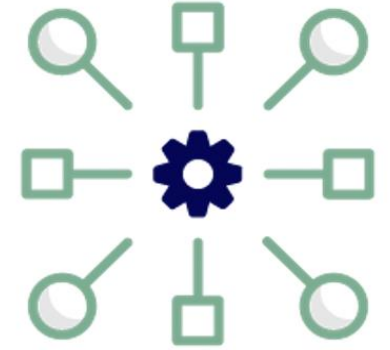
Coach

Specific skill/subject
Time-limited
Sometimes in groups



Sponsor

Use influence to make
sponsee more visible
Behind the scenes
"Fairy godmother"



Connector

Extensive network,
usually senior
Pair mentors, coaches,
sponsors with mentees
"Multipliers"

Chopra V, Arora V, Saint S. JAMA Intern Med, 2017.

Crafting a career: don't travel alone



It's okay to not know everything.

Find your mentoring team (a.k.a. your own board of directors)

- Project/skill mentors
- Leadership mentors
- Career mentors

Local: Division leaders, peer mentors, groups, other divisions

National: Associations, prior training sites

Wray CM. 2009.; DeCastro R et al. Acad Med;2013; Kieffer KA et al; JGIM. 2026.

Competencies: Clinical Educator Milestones



Educational Theory and Practice 1: Teaching and Facilitating Learning				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Identifies various techniques for teaching	Delivers instruction in unidirectional manner resulting in passive learning	Teaches in a way that invites active learning and encourages critical appraisal	Uses scholarly teaching methods for varied levels of learners across settings	Serves as a coach to other educators on effective teaching practices
Discusses lessons implicitly learned (e.g., hidden curriculum)	Identifies that own behavior (role modeling) is part of the hidden curriculum	Intentionally role models desired practice behaviors to aid learners	Intentionally role models desired behaviors to aid learners across multiple settings	Works collaboratively to develop educators' ability to demonstrate evidence-based teaching behaviors
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments: Not Yet Completed Level 1 ☐				

Graduates of teaching fellowships

Benefits

- Strengthened confidence, self-efficacy, professional identity, credibility, validation
- Readiness for leadership/administrative role in education
- Satisfaction with career trajectory, skill development, community, mentorship

Constraints

- Unclear career structures
- Balancing clinical/educational duties
- Limited formal pathways for advancement



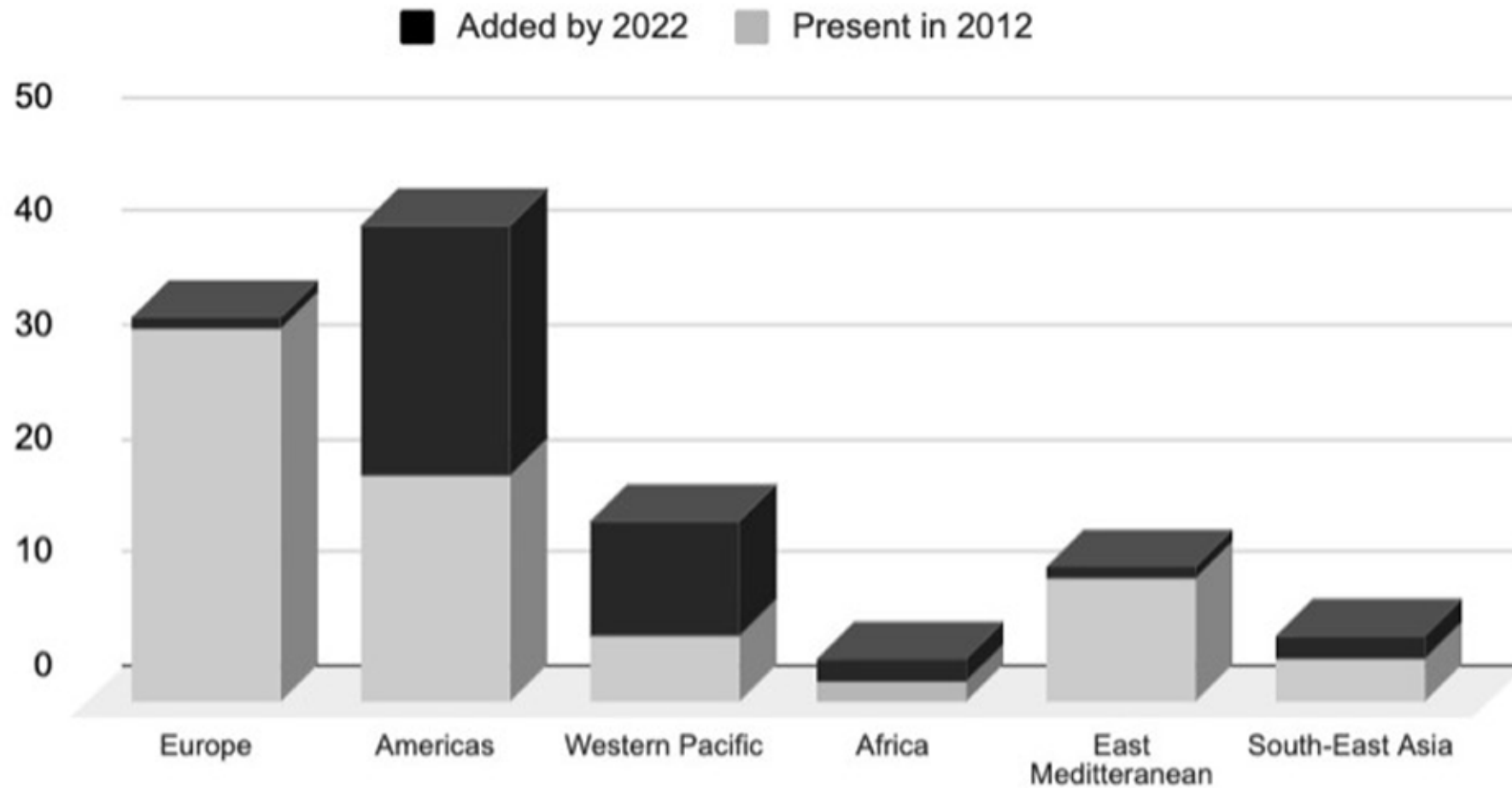
Masters Degrees in health professions education: 2-3 years

Concentrations

- Leadership development
- Medical education
- Technology in education
- Philosophy/Ethics
- Healthcare principles
- Assessment methods
- Research methods
- Academic/professional writing



Rapid growth of Masters in Health Professions Education programs



Doctoral programs

PhD, EdD

- Focus
 - Research and scholarship
 - Educational development, management
 - Dissertation/thesis
- 20 programs in US and Canada
- Approx. 4 years
- \$505-\$1354/credit hour
- 48-96 credit hours

Scholarship- “3 P’s”



Tangible,
reproducible
Product/Platform
for others to build on



Peer-
reviewed



Publicly
Disseminated

Categories of Scholarship

Discovery

Creates new knowledge
Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research

Integration

Synthesize existing knowledge
Use a new lens to understand it
Translate it for a different audience

- *Review articles*
- *Book chapters*
- *Curriculum*



Application

Use knowledge, theory to
solve a real-world problem
- Innovation

Teaching?

Controversial whether teaching is
scholarship unless it meets the 3 criteria

Crafting a career: embrace scholarship

- Variable currency in different fields
 - “coin of the realm” in some
- If interested
 - Expand foundation in medical education theory and research skills
 - MERC, mentored projects, national association



Crafting a career: turn everyday duties into defining opportunities

- Lean into overlooked tasks
 - May seem mundane at first
 - Administrative hassle
 - Innovate
 - Develop niche



Crafting a career: Emotional intelligence

- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Communication/IP skills
- Managing conflict
- Supporting mutual respect and others' success



Crafting a career: Master the details

- Answer emails
- Show up
- Meet deadlines



How do I support my time?

- Leadership roles
 - FTE support
 - Admin support
 - Efficiencies
- Skill development
 - CME funds
 - Tuition benefits
 - Grants



What are **two things** you can do **now** to start preparing for the next step?

- Choose a prototype that most appeals to you.
- Identify 2 steps/resources you can use to explore or develop that path.
 - **Who** will you ask for help?
 - **How** can you get feedback?
- This is a pilot, not a commitment!
- Write it down. 😊



Take home points

- Make it meaningful: build off your own strengths and values
- Develop your skill set
- Find your mentors (and engage well with them)
- Accept constraints
- Prototype at least 3 options before committing to action



Thank you!



Evaluation and
CME credit



Valerie_Lang@urmc.Rochester.edu

References

- Boyer EL. Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate. Carnegie Foundation, 1990.
- Burnett B, Evans D. Designing your life: how to make a well-lived, joyful life. Knopf. 2016.
- Chopra V, Arora VM, Saint S. Will you be my mentor?—Four archetypes to help mentees succeed in academic medicine. *JAMA internal medicine*. 2018 Feb;178(2).
- DeCastro R et al. Mentor networks in academic medicine: Moving beyond a dyadic conception of mentoring for junior faculty researchers. *Acad Med*;2013(88):488-96.
- Glassick CE. Scholarship assessed: evaluation of the professoriate. Carnegie Foundation, 1997.
- Kieffer KA, Carluzzo KL, Albert D. Unmet Mentorship Needs in Academic Internal Medicine: A Survey of Faculty Affiliated with a U.S. Medical School. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2026 Feb;41(3):642-649. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09665-6. Epub 2025 Jul 22. PMID: 40696224; PMCID: PMC12960287.
- Kulo V, Cestone C. A CPD imperative? Examining trends and characteristics of HPE doctoral programs. *BMC Medical Education* (2022) 22:853.
- Lown B, et al. *Acad Med*, 2009. Yang Y et al. *JGME*, 2023. McMains KC, TLM, 2023. Coates W et al. *Acad Med*. Heck A et al. *MSE*, 2024.
- Sambunjak D, Marusic A. Mentoring: What's in a name? *JAMA*;2009(23):2591-2.
- Schermerhorn J, Wilcox S, Durning S et al. Masters in health professions education programs as they choose to represent themselves: A website review [version 2]. *MedEdPublish* 2023, 13:13 (doi: 10.12688/mep.19498.2)
- Varpio L et al. Professional identity formation metaphors: old problems and new promises. *Perspect Med Educ*. 2025;14(1):219-229.
- Wray CM. Crafting a successful career in academic medicine: lessons for an aspiring academic. *JGIM*. 2025.
- Zaeri, R., Gandomkar, R. Developing entrustable professional activities for doctoral graduates in health professions education: obtaining a national consensus in Iran. *BMC Med Educ* 22, 424 (2022).



Professional Development Series 8/14/26

QR Code to
Evaluation and CME credit

