Molecular Medicine

Bob Nussbaum presented on the current state of Molecular Medicine (MM). He was asked to provide an overview of the program as the Council considers how to structure the College of Physician Scientists and increase the number of physician scientists recruited in the department.

- MM is part of the campus wide Pathways to Discovery Program. The other 4 pathways are Global Health, Clinical Translational, Health and Society, and Health Professional Education. Pathways is a mechanism to allow medical students to focus on areas beyond their current curriculum.
- So far, only Medicine and Pediatric residents are participating in MM. Other clinical departments feel they already have the physician scientist training under control. In some departments, residents also have difficult schedules that preclude them from participating.
- Criteria for considering interested residents are that they have an MD/PhD or substantial laboratory experience, have published a first author paper in a peer-reviewed journal, and/or have an excellent reference letter from their research mentor. Annually, there are approximately 18-24 medical and 16 pediatrics residency applicants that fit these criteria.
- The lure of accepting an MM position is that the resident will be offered a fellowship of their choice. This, however, is not much of an incentive because the candidate usually has a pick of where s/he wants to go, there is now a match, and the fellowship selection process is decentralized by each division. Most residents want to go into HemOnc but there are limited fellowship slots.
- Medicine MM residents are expected to attend the Journal Club held every other Friday, when they are not on the inpatient service, and to present at least 2 times/year. The Pediatric MM residents usually do not attend the Journal Club and cannot be made to. The topics are usually anchored to a clinical problem.
- Bob’s hosts 3 evening sessions/year at his house, which faculty also attend to provide the residents with networking and mentoring opportunities.
- The major barriers to increasing participation in MM are the following:
- Fragmented, decentralized organization based on piecing together existing components across the campus and between departments.
- Guarantee of fellowship slot is not truly a guarantee. Applicants can choose wherever they want to go and there is now a match.
- Resident scheduling prohibits full participation, including research work in a laboratory because of clinical responsibilities, although some residents have managed to arrange research by not short-tracking.
- Research funding beginning in the fellowship years are patched together based on available resources.
- No continuity of mentoring after entering the fellowship.
- Transition to faculty is an unclear pathway.

Bob was asked how he would use unlimited funds, if they existed. He responded that he would provide each MM resident with an allocation to take with them to their fellowship for technical support, supplies, and/or guaranteed salary support for the first year they are being trained. What would help him most immediately is if he had 30 committed faculty who he could call upon to interview, screen, engage applicants, and mentor the residents throughout their career at UCSF.

It was suggested that engaging the applicants during the interview process with dinner with 2 faculty and 2-3 fellows (ideally previous MM residents) would help to encourage applicants accept offers. It is clear that MM residents join the program in the hopes of being mentored, having opportunities to network, and receiving help to transition to a junior faculty position.

**Future Meetings (location to be determined):**

- Tuesday, February 12, 2013
- Monday, March 11, 2013
- Tuesday, April 9, 2013
- Monday, May 13, 2013
- Tuesday, June 11, 2013