

Council of Deans (COD) Fellowship Program Leadership Project Guidelines

Participation in the COD Fellowship Program provides fellows with a yearlong “crash course” in the competencies and responsibilities unique to the dean’s role. During this experience, fellows can self-identify gaps in their professional experience, knowledge, and skills, that, if bridged, could better prepare them for serving as dean of a medical school.

The Leadership Project requires each fellow to identify a gap in professional knowledge and/or experience related to the dean’s role and to coordinate specific experiences (within and in addition to participation in the Fellowship Program) to bridge this gap. During the course of the fellowship year, each fellow will develop and implement plans to address the knowledge/experience gap and achieve intended outcomes.

Fellows should seek guidance from the dean at their home institution, dean mentors, and others familiar with their professional experience when determining which knowledge/experience gap to address through their leadership project. We encourage fellows to use the time between their formal acceptance into the program and the program start date to engage in conversations with these individuals about approaches that can strengthen or expand current skills and to seek feedback from COD program staff and the COD Fellowship Committee Chair as needed. Please note that surveying the full COD is not permitted for Leadership Projects.

Completion of the leadership project demonstrates the fellow can:

- Assess professional readiness to take on responsibilities unique to the medical school dean’s role;
- Develop new skills and knowledge to advance his/her aspirations of becoming a medical school dean;
- Acquire perspectives from current leaders in academic medicine on critical competencies specific to medical school and teaching hospital/health system leadership.

Each fellow will describe his/her project in an oral report to the COD, which will be shared via web conference during the summer of the fellowship year. Reports must provide background on the knowledge/experience gap; the fellow’s implementation plan; intended outcomes; limitations; and a self-assessment of the application of knowledge, skills, and abilities gained or refined during the fellowship experience.

Examples of potential projects include:

- Working with your institution’s dean and development office to understand the dean’s role in fundraising and gain practical experience in fundraising for the institution.
- Working with the Chief Financial Officer and business leaders at your home institution and dean mentors’ institutions to understand different models for funds flow in academic medical centers and the challenges/opportunities of each.
- Working with your dean and mentors to explore the skills needed for managing relationships with university leaders (e.g., dean-provost, dean-university president).

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