



Preparation for a Successful Career

ROB MENTZ: I've now been on faculty for seven years and I have to say that the heart failure and the research training, I experienced at Duke as part of the DCRI fellowship really, really changed my life.

CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR: And as I reflect back, I was in the Duke Cardiovascular Databank a long time ago. It was early 1986 to 1987 is when I served in that capacity. Dr. Califf was—I was Dr. Califf's first fellow.

RACHEL GREENBERG: As a fellow at DCRI, I think it gave me the exposure to the type of career that I otherwise wouldn't have really known was possible because I was surrounded by faculty mentors who have had success in clinical research, which was pretty stimulating to me and made me realize really what was possible.

JULIUS WILDER: First of all, I think that, you know, reflecting on the training I got, it was pretty incredible. I had an opportunity to engage with, learn from many individuals who are well known in the world of clinical research, who are really the thought leaders. And they, many times throughout our fellowship, took the time to engage us, speak to us about their careers, provide insight and guidance when we had questions.

And it was through those experiences that I began to understand how clinical trials developed. I began to become a co-PI or co-investigator on clinical trials, and it is one of the reasons why I continue to be very active in clinical trial work today successfully because of what I experienced as a DCRI fellow.

CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR: My experience there was one in which I was given some guidance and developed a project idea and then was really let loose to work with the wonderful colleagues, that form the the Duke Databank at that time, or really the precursor to the DCRI. And so I was involved with statisticians, project managers, data managers, and we were involved in some really interesting projects.

ROB MENTZ: As I think about some of the key things that really stood out for me, it was the mentorship piece. From the day I arrived at Duke and DCRI, I felt like I had the mentorship to really take things to the next level.

And it's helped me now as I've been fortunate to take on a leadership role as the chief of our heart failure section, and now the editor in chief of the Journal of Cardiac Failure. I really feel like I would not have had these opportunities that I not been a DCRI fellow. I cannot think of a better place to do training and to have that fellow to faculty transition.

JULIUS WILDER: It is rare to be in a place where you can have that experience early on in your career at all those different phases and learn that early on, how to successfully navigate all those different phases



early on. So I think that's one of the things that really sets the DCRI apart—being what it is, an academic organization, that is capable of really training you to be successful at every phase with respect to clinical research.

RACHEL GREENBERG: I think that training the next generation of fellows is something that I've really personally experienced in terms of you know, being, mentored by a fellow and then being a fellow and now mentoring fellows in the program. I feel like I've seen all aspects of the DCRI Fellowship Program.

And it's so important to grow people in the stage of fellowship because they're—I think they're really at a turning point in their careers.

ROB MENTZ: The mantra at Duke and DCRI is what's right for the patient, what's right for the fellows, what's right for the faculty. So having that order and that focus, I think, helps us to really lead exceptional patient care, but make sure that our focus is on the trainees. We were all in that position at one point, and I think are really taking the lessons learned from the environment that is so special here at Duke of promoting and lifting up the next generation—and that shows. It shows when fellows are leading papers, they're leading late-breaking clinical trials, and they're the ones on the podium. And we really do want to lift them up and recognize all of their hard work and help give them some of the glory for all the work they've done.