Program Overview

I. Purpose and Overview

For the last 5 years, Seattle Children’s Hospital (SCH) has provided junior and mid-level faculty advanced training through its Quality Improvement Scholars (QI Scholars) Program. Starting in the summer of 2021, the QI Scholars Program will expand to include a pilot cohort of 3-5 UW Medicine participants along with the SCH cohort. The QI Scholars Program is designed to support junior and mid-level faculty pursuing QI as a scholarly focus. This competitive one-year program provides the skills and support needed to successfully complete and publish rigorous QI research projects. Scholars participate in a seminar series that covers a range of improvement topics delivered over 12 interactive sessions. Throughout the year, Scholars directly apply course content through work on an improvement project, supported by a project mentor, statistician, and data analyst. Scholars are given the opportunity to meet and interact with nationally known improvement experts. The program prepares graduates to pursue careers in academic quality improvement while building operational leadership skills. Scholars are expected to publish their projects in a peer-reviewed journal at the end of the course, and many graduates of the SCH program have become Directors of Quality for their divisions.

Three-five Scholars will be selected for the 2020-2021 UW Medicine Cohort.

II. Program Components

A. Curriculum

Scholars are exposed to a wide variety of state-of-the-art QI research methods during 12 monthly half-day seminars. The seminars are a blend of didactics, small group exercises, and practical hands-on applications. The seminars are led by both internal and external experts in the field of QI science (see attached seminar schedule and descriptions). Scholars are provided with pre-readings 2 weeks in advance of each session.

B. Mentoring and Statistical Support

The QI Scholars Program provides each Scholar with access to a mentorship team which includes an Academic Research Coach and a QI project mentor. The Scholar is required to meet at least once a month with their mentorship team to refine their project design, identify resource needs, interpret data, and draft a manuscript. The Scholar also meets with the Program’s data and analytics contact who assists with data acquisition/cleaning and analysis. Scholars are expected to present their developing projects at quarterly work-in-progress meetings with all program faculty.

C. Salary Support, Protected Time, Costs

The QI Scholars Program requires 10% FTE effort. The program will be funded jointly by the Departments from which the selected Scholars originate and the Hospital at which the project takes place, with additional funding provided by the UW Medicine Center for Scholarship in Patient Care Quality and Safety. The Department sponsoring the Scholar will provide 10% release time plus $8,000 tuition per Scholar. Additional support is provided by the Center and Scholar’s home hospital.

The release time is intended to protect time for attending monthly half-day seminars (4 hours/seminar), quarterly work-in-progress meetings (2 hours/meeting), and monthly meetings (1 hour/meeting) with the Scholar’s mentorship team, statistician, and data analyst.
III. Expectations of QI Scholars

A. Research Project

Each Scholar is expected to complete their QI research project and submit a first-authored manuscript of the results after the 12 months of program participation. If the QI project is ongoing at the end of the first 12 months, all Scholars are eligible for an additional 12 months project extension to support ongoing statistical or data needs.

B. Monthly Seminar Attendance

Scholars are required to attend the 12 half-day interactive learning seminars on various QI research methods. **Attendance at all of these seminars is a requirement of the program.** These seminars occur on Tuesdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Scholars should plan to attend seminars in person to maximize learning and interaction; however, some sessions may remain virtual for the 2021-2022 cohort.

C. Quarterly Presentations and Attendance at Work-In-Progress Sessions

All program faculty (Scholars, mentors, data analysts, statisticians) will meet quarterly for a 2-hour work-in-progress conference. Each Scholar is expected to provide an update on their project and receive feedback from the other meeting attendees.

IV. Eligibility Criteria

A. Participant Eligibility

1. Preference is given to applicants who are junior to mid-level faculty in the UW Medicine system with an established interest in quality improvement. **Strong applicants will have a QI project that is aligned with UW Medicine priorities which is planned or already implemented prior to the program start date of October 2021.**

2. Individuals who are **ineligible** include:
   - Full Professors on any track
   - Faculty scientists

3. Applicants must be able to commit to one year at a minimum of **10% FTE protected time.**

4. Applicants must hold a University of Washington School of Medicine faculty appointment. If the applicant has not yet been appointed to a faculty position, a letter from the Department Head/Division Chief stating that such an appointment will commence at the time that QI Scholars funding will begin is required.

V. Application Process

All eligible faculty are encouraged to apply. A selection committee comprised of senior quality and safety leaders at UW Medicine and QI Scholars faculty will select the Scholars through a competitive application process. Each application will be reviewed and independently scored by 3 reviewers. Consideration will be given to the career development goals of the applicant, the feasibility and focus of the proposed QI project, as well as alignment with organizational priorities. All applicants will receive written feedback on their proposals.

VI. Application Requirements

Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their Department Head/Division Chief, mentors, and Quality/Safety leaders at their hospital for input on their proposed QI project. Dr. Rutman is also available for consultation with interested applicants (email lorirutman@seattlechildrens.org). All applicants must apply online via this link. We will not
accept applications received via email. The application requirements are described below.

1. Application cover page should include:
   - Project Title
   - Applicant Name
   - Applicant’s academic rank and track
   - Department and Division in which the applicant is a member
   - Name of the applicant’s Department Head/Division Chief

2. Description of QI research project (2 pages maximum excluding references, Arial 11-point, single-spaced, ½ inch margins – proposals not adhering to these instructions will not be reviewed). Please clearly indicate the stage of the project (planned, implemented/underway, completed).

   Please include the following sections in your project proposal:
   - Brief background/significance: Why is improvement needed in your area of focus? What is the rationale for your intervention? Cite supporting literature – or lack of previous studies in this area of care.
   - Objective/Aim: What are you trying to accomplish with your QI project?
   - Alignment with hospital priorities: Describe how this project aligns with quality improvement goals of the hospital at which this project is taking place.
     Priority Areas:
     - Improving patient care outcomes
     - Increasing patient care efficiency
     - Enhancing patient and family experience of care
     - Promoting communication with patients and families or between clinicians
     - Strengthening equity, diversity, and inclusion
     - Supporting the care delivery process
     - Innovations in care deliver using AI or robotic process automation
   - Research question(s) applicant would like to answer: Limit to three key questions. State a hypothesis for each research question.
   - Time frame: What is the study time-period of interest? Consider a pre-intervention baseline period and post-intervention period.
   - Measures of interest: List of potential process, outcome and balancing measures relevant to the aim and research questions.
   - Potential data sources: Describe data sources for the proposed project – indicate ease of access to these data (i.e., electronic health record, chart review, manual data collection).
   - Ideas for study design: Applicants may propose a draft idea for the study design, however, this is not required. The assumption is that the final design will be determined during work sessions with the applicant’s assigned mentorship team and the data and analytics team during the first 2 months of program participation.
   - Proposed Timeline for Project: QI Scholars projects must be completed over a 12-month period. This time-frame should include write-up of the study results and submission for publication. Provide a proposed timeline for the project that fits within these parameters.
   - Ethical considerations/IRB: The applicant should state their plans for IRB application submission, i.e., will they apply for exemption, expedited review, or full review.
If an IRB application has already been submitted – the applicant should state this and indicate where in the IRB process the application is, i.e., under review, approved, etc.

3. **Letter from Department Head/Division Chief** including commitment of 10% FTE (total) protected time.
4. **Current CV**
5. **A half page personal statement** indicating how the applicant believes that participating in the program will advance their career.