Educating Translational Researchers Using Distance Education

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The Interactive Online Classroom

Objectives

The recent IOM report¹ of the CTSA program emphasized the need for flexible, online training of translational researchers. Launched in May 2010, The George Washington University’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences Graduate Program in Clinical and Translational Research (CTR) is unique in that it is offered completely online, facilitating greater participation by students with demanding clinical, teaching, and research responsibilities.

Methods

Using innovative teaching methods, the program is designed to build collaborative skills while allowing flexibility to participate asynchronously and on a part-time schedule. The rigorous curriculum is aligned with the CTR Core Competencies². Students create an individualized program of study through electives and independent study coursework. Use of faculty-led, interactive online discussion boards, group and individual projects, and other collaborative tools simulate today’s distributed teams.

Impact

The CTR Program illustrates an effective use of distance education in the training of clinical and translational researchers. Due to its asynchronous online format, the program 1) has a global outreach, attracting researchers across geographical boundaries, 2) provides flexibility to accommodate the demanding schedules of clinicians and other researchers, while maintaining a rigorous program of study, and 3) emphasizes the team science and leadership skills referenced as areas of desired interest by the IOM.

References


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