



T32 in Cancer Biology A Brief History

University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus

Mary Reyland, PhD

T32 years 1-5

- Mary Reyland Scott Cramer, MPIs
- Funded 5 postdocs and 1 predoc – restrained by the 3:1 NCI mandate
 - Cancer Center also funded a predoc slot
 - Predocs were typically starting their 3rd year (post-comps). All from the cancer biology graduate program
 - Postdocs were usually in their first year
 - Prioritized funding underrepresented pre and postdocs
- Broad based cancer training
 - Requires clinical exposure
 - Requires grant submission
 - Postdoc specific activities – postdoc symposium
- 28 faculty including 5 “co-mentored” faculty
- Housed in the Cancer Center - provides admin support and about 100K/year in financial support



Outcomes

- Trained 5 predocs and 16 postdocs. One predoc was MSTP. One postdoc was a MD/PhD, one was MD
- 33% of trainees were from underrepresented populations in science
- 3 predocs and 8 postdocs were awarded extramural fellowships (52%)
- At time of renewal most trainees were still in training or medical school. Remainder were in academic positions or industry.
- For A1, the average number of publications for T32 pre-docs was 1.75; for T32 postdocs it was 2.8, with 14 as first author.
 - Sent an update for A1 that included 7 additional publications (5 first)

TIMELINE



Challenges of a first renewal (years 6-10)

- Very limited time to show success (esp publications and career outcomes)
 - Publication issues are more significant for predocs since they are unlikely to have first author publications by year 3 or 4.
 - A predoc transitioning to a postdoc is a positive career outcome. Transition from a postdoc to academics/research position for postdocs can take more time.
- Focus on what worked well and acknowledge what did not. Show that you are responsive to evolving training needs.
- When do you submit?
 - Ideally when you have two cycles remaining, but this is only after 3.5 years.
 - We waited until 4 years but ended up with a gap. Challenging because we could only offer one year of funding in year 5.



HOW WE PLANNED

- Metrics we focused on for the renewal (from day 1): publications, **fellowships**, career outcomes, **diversity**
 - Mandated fellowship submission
 - Priority to qualified UR applicants
- Meet with Trainees and with Faculty mentors at start of each year
 - Stressed involvement (RIP, retreat)
 - Stressed publications and grants
 - Had to sign-off that they understood and supported program requirements
 - T32 is valued and prestigious – everyone was very co-operative
- In preparation for the renewal:
 - EAB meeting (include report in Advisory Committee section)
 - Self study – faculty and trainees
 - Used these as a starting point for changes in renewal
- Sent an update to PO –trainee publications and grants



Successes of A0

- Fellowships
- Diversity

Weaknesses of A0

- Publications
- Lack of career outcomes data



Summary Statement (A0)

- Uneven distribution of faculty with trainees
- Publication record poor/Publication rate acceptable but could be improved
- How TPCB adds value other than financial
- Overlap with other T32s (evolving and potentially more problematic as slots/T32 decrease)
- Career development opportunities (details)
- Career trajectory of postdocs could be improved
- Not a compelling case for increasing postdocs numbers (what % are covered on other T32s?)



Tips

- Use your EAB!!
- Plan early and let mentors know the expectations – always have metrics in mind. You might step on some toes.
- Include robust evaluation
- Remind reviewers of short history
- Highlight your accomplishments
- Highlight specific trainees
- Address weaknesses head on and propose mitigation
- Send an update

