

SIU School of Medicine

Mentored Professional Enrichment Experience

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General Information

The Mentored Professional Enrichment Experience (MPEE) is an optional eight-week elective between the first and second years of medical school. MPEE is an opportunity for you (as SIU-SOM medical students) to pursue interests in research and career development that you would not otherwise be able to investigate. Regardless of the area chosen for investigation, you are expected to play an active role in the project. **Under the guidance of a faculty mentor**, you will develop the initial question, design a method to obtain an answer, establish clear goals and objectives to achieve an outcome and present the conclusions of this work before an audience of faculty and peers. MPEE project areas include "traditional" laboratory research, clinical research, or investigations in health-related areas such as rehabilitation, social work, health education, public health or academic medicine. MPEE projects could involve empirical data gathering or they could be more oriented toward library research. You may join an ongoing faculty research project; however, random "shadowing" of physicians performing their usual clinical activities is not an acceptable project. The location for MPEE may be in Carbondale, Springfield, or another approved site. **You will need both an on-site and an SIU-SOM mentor to sponsor an "out-of-country" (i.e., some place other than the United States) project.**

MPEE projects should describe distinct activities for the summer period. A mentor may sponsor multiple students, but the proposals should be distinct and focus on a different aspect of a larger project.

Here is one perspective of MPEE, as it appeared in the Spring 2003 issue of The Generalist (a newsletter of the Family Medicine Interest Group at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine):

"It's a nice way to spend a summer. It was good to be up in Springfield early to get a handle on the town, hospital and school. I also really enjoyed the people in the division. I also was in a place where I could get a lot of experience with the two hospitals. I also really liked the variety of potential projects, everything from not so rigorous clinical research, to more rigorous clinical research and bench research. There really is something there for everyone if they take the time to look." - *Cecelia Powless, Class of 2005*

MPEE

For those of you interested in carrying out projects in other medical schools in the U.S. or Canada, use the following link to their individual web sites in order to find potential faculty mentors:

<http://www.aamc.org/members/listings/msalphae.htm>

Specific Project Information

The Directory of Research Mentors provides a listing of SIU-SOM faculty members and the specific areas of their research. Look for the MPEE Mentor Checkbox to determine if a faculty member is willing to participate in the MPEE program. This directory is frequently updated but it is always a good idea to inquire about potential opportunities even if a faculty member has indicated not to serve as a mentor. The MPEE Program Coordinator may make suggestions or give input about potential projects but does not find or set-up mentors or projects.

Information about special approvals such as for laboratory animals or human subjects also differs, **as approvals for freshmen medical student projects are obtained via the Office of Research Development and Administration (ORDA)**, a division of the Graduate School in Carbondale. Please check their web site (<http://www.siu.edu/orда/human/>) for important information if the project you are considering might involve special compliances. The SIU-SOM human subjects (SCRIHS) office may be contacted at the following phone numbers (217- 545-2172, 217-545-7602, or 217-545-2184). **As a general rule, IF you are working with somebody who has human subjects approval at their home institution and IF the work you are doing will NOT result in a solo publication, such as a dissertation, securing the distant institution's approval number and the P.I.'s name and phone number should be all we need. If you are developing an independent project, you will need to seek this approval early in the process (i.e., submit your proposal to ORDA at the same time you submit it to MPEE. You will submit a copy of the approval letter to us prior to the end of the Year One curriculum in May.**

Proposals must be in your own writing. You may use material provided by a mentor but the writing must be your own.

Proposals from those of you wishing to work for the same mentor must describe separate distinct activities. Working with the same mentor as someone else is acceptable as long as each of you has described a distinct aspect of the mentor's larger project.

The following are (or were) potential sources of funding for summer research projects (search the Internet for additional opportunities):

- Medical Student Summer Orthopaedic Research Fellowship
The Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation (OREF)
- AFAR Awards Programs
American Federation for Aging Research
- AAAAI Summer Fellowship Medical Student Grants
American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology

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- Medical Students Summer Fellowship
American Parkinson Disease Association
- David E. Rogers Fellowship Program
New York Academy of Medicine
- Orthopaedic Research and Fellowship Foundation
Medical Student Summer Orthopaedic Research Fellowship
- Summer Research Fellowship Program
National Institutes of Health
- Summer Fellowships
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
- Vascular Surgery Research - William J. von Liebig Summer Research Fellowship
Harvard Medical School

Eligibility

You must be a Year One student **in good standing and not in summer remediation during the weeks of MPEE activities** at SIU School of Medicine. You will identify a mentor with established credentials in the area of the planned experience. **Again, please note that if you choose to work outside of the United States, you will need an SIU-SOM mentor to sponsor your project.** The mentor will work closely with you as you design, implement and complete the project. Project applications will be reviewed anonymously by teams of faculty members and the MPEE Committee. Approved participants in the MPEE must enroll as full-time students and pay fees. Tuition will be waived; however, you are responsible for paying the fees (approximately \$1,222). You will receive three hours credit for the eight-week elective block. Please note, however, that you will still be expected to complete 31 hours of elective credit during your fourth year.

Mechanisms of Support

Medical Student Support

For those projects that are approved by the MPEE Committee, there is the possibility of obtaining funding of up to \$3,000 to defray expenses during the summer session (2009-2010 summer fees are ~\$1,222). Typical expenses may include, for example, room and board, transportation, and actual project costs. Projects may be approved but not funded, approved and partially funded or approved and funded to the \$3,000 maximum. Awards are allocated from a limited pool of funds, so funding will depend upon the number of approved applications.

Any scholarship awarded becomes part of your financial aid package. Funds will be distributed to you via your Bursar account early in June. Once summer fees are deducted (~\$1,222 for 2009-2010), any residual will be paid out to you. Should you require funding beyond the MPEE allocation, other funding should be pursued through the Medical School Financial Aid Office in Springfield.

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Please note the following:

If you will receive a stipend or pay from another source, MPEE takes this amount into account in determining the scholarship.

If you receive federal loans as part of your financial aid package, MPEE funding may be limited because of existing federal rules. This becomes important if you apply for and receive external funding to support your activities.

If you will be involved in clinical studies with patients AND will receive a stipend or pay from another source (a stipend from another institution), you will not be eligible for malpractice insurance through SIU-SOM. Please check with the outside institution concerning malpractice insurance.

The SIU-SOM statement concerning liability coverage reads as follows:

"General and Professional Liability coverage is afforded to any enrolled student acting in the scope of an approved unpaid program for which academic credit or the equivalent may be awarded."

Mentor Support

You should indicate to your prospective mentor (this only applies to SIU mentors) that they may submit a separate request for reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for project expenses such as laboratory supplies or subject expenses used during the course of the MPEE project. This request for funds can be included in the letter from your mentor confirming agreement to serve as your mentor (see below). Not all mentors will be funded, as support funds are limited.

Please note that you and your mentor are responsible for ordering items for project related activities. MPEE does not get involved in the ordering process.

Environment

The MPEE site selected for the project should have library facilities and institutional resources suitable for the proposed field of study. You will describe how you will maximize the use of relevant research and educational resources.

Evaluation

There are three inputs for evaluating your MPEE activities.

- Your mentor(s) will evaluate your performance at the completion of the MPEE project.
- You will provide an oral presentation (typically <10 minutes in duration), along with the other MPEE participants, of the project activities to peers and faculty (generally on a Friday in early September of Year Two that will be videoconferenced to the Carbondale campus).

MPEE

- You will submit a completed MPEE questionnaire (this will be e-mailed to you).

Successful participation in the MPEE, as assessed by the above input, will be noted in the official Dean's letter.

Professional Behavior

You should remember that you are arranging and participating in a professional experience. Your interactions with faculty at SIU and at other institutions should demonstrate a high level of professional behavior. Be polite, plan ahead, and keep in contact with your mentor. Advise your mentor of any updates and changes in your plans as soon as possible. Remember that your actions may impact others.

Application Guidelines

Student

- All applications will be submitted electronically (attach a MS Word document to an e-mail) to the MPEE Program Coordinator listed below.
- As soon as you have identified a mentor, please present a copy of the MPEE Mentor Notes to your mentor.
- Proposals must be in your own writing. You may use material provided by a mentor but the writing must be your own.
- Proposals from those of you wishing to work for the same mentor must describe separate distinct activities. Working with the same mentor as someone else is acceptable as long as each of you has described a distinct aspect of the mentor's larger project.
- The **maximum length of the application is three pages**. Please use Times font size of 12. Applications that exceed this length will not be accepted. Please keep references or footnotes to a minimum.
- You will ask your mentor to submit information described in the Mentor section below.
- **All activities outside of the United States will require a special meeting with Dr. Erik Constance.** After your application form is submitted, the Office of Student Affairs will contact you about a meeting time. Additional forms will need to be completed as part of this process. You must carry travel insurance coverage while participating in a study abroad experience. It is your responsibility to ensure the coverage is valid outside the United States in the country in which you will be traveling and is sufficient to cover emergency evacuations. **You are responsible for securing any and all travel visas and for obtaining all necessary vaccinations.** Information about vaccinations can be obtained from [SIUC Health Service](#).
- Deadlines:

Submission of application: **5 p.m. Monday February 1, 2010**

Submission of mentor letter: **before the end of February 2010**

Notification of approval and awards: **~Monday March 1, 2010**

MPEE

Obtain Human or Animal Subjects approval: **no later than May 2010 (submit copy of approval letter)**

- **Failure to follow the procedures outlined above or to meet the appropriate deadlines may result in disqualification for MPEE.**

Mentor

Mentor will submit a letter confirming his/her agreement to serve as a mentor for the applicant and, if project expense support funds are desired (for SIU mentors only), a brief budget request. Information should be sent before the end of February 2010 to:

Eric C. Niederhoffer, Ph.D.
MPEE Program Coordinator
SIU School of Medicine
Lindergren 112, MC 6503
600 Agriculture Drive
Carbondale, IL 62901-4310

eniederhoffer@siumed.edu
618-453-6467

- Proposals must be written by the student applicant. You may provide background material for the student to use as information during the writing process and offer advice and proofreading. Do encourage the student to learn to write a focused proposal.
- You may sponsor multiple students but each student written proposal must describe separate distinct activities. Working with multiple students is acceptable as long as each student has described a distinct aspect of the your larger project.