

## **Introducing the MeCABE program for medical post-doctoral research scientists**

### Authors

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### Background

Although most postdoctoral researchers (PDRs) thrive in academic research and desire to become independent investigators, they also desire to explore alternative careers, and successful transition into academic positions is only 20%. In an effort to better support the needs of PDRs seeking knowledge about non-academic careers, and to provide specified training to better prepare them the Mentoring for Careers in Alternative Biomedical Excellence (MeCABE) program was developed in 2019 and implemented from 2020 to 2022.

### Objectives

The goals of the MeCABE program are to 1) increase opportunities for PDRs to learn the specific skills needed for non-academic careers, 2) learn more about the breadth of career options, 3) increase oral communication skills, 4) provide realistic mentoring from individuals currently in their desired professional path, 5) reduce the time needed to secure employment.

### Methods

The MeCABE program provides monthly training sessions for a small group (3-6 PDRs) in which they learn more about career paths from mentors, who are individuals that have done their post-doctoral training at Wake Forest and transitioned into non-academic careers. This common connection and small group size helps mentees feel a stronger connection to the mentors, while the mentors have a fondness for contributing to the next generation of Wake Forest PDRs, while facilitating strong network development, as social networking is the most common means of securing employment. During monthly training sessions the MeCABE cohorts and mentors discuss career options, pathways that the mentors used for securing employment, and practice new-found skills, such as professional pitches, resume writing, job-hunting, interviewing, and networking.

### Anticipated Results

The major outcome of the Wake-MeCABE program is successful transition of PDRs into non-academic positions, with at least 80 % success rate during an 18 month period.

### Next Steps

The MeCABE program was originally designed for PhD research scientists; however, there are a number of MDs and DVMs who decide to pursue research in lieu of clinical medicine, and also desire opportunities beyond academic research. The next steps of the MeCABE program will further define the needs of these PDRs and recruit appropriate mentors.