

Traineeships in AIDS Prevention Studies (TAPS)

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Project Description

The Traineeships in AIDS Prevention Studies (TAPS) program trains scientists for academic and public health careers. TAPS has been in existence since 1989 and has trained nearly 100 scientists focusing on various aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention, both domestically and internationally. The graduates of the program hold positions at universities around the US, at the CDC, NIH, several foundations, and health departments in California and in San Francisco in particular. The program supports 12 postdoctoral fellows with diverse backgrounds, including physicians (OB/GYNs, pediatricians, infectious disease specialists and internists), epidemiologists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and so forth. About half of the 12 focus on biomedical or epidemiological issues and half focus on social, behavioral and policy research.

To apply to TAPS, candidates must have a PhD, MD, or equivalent doctorate degree. At the end of the two- or three-year program each trainee has: completed an MPH degree or its equivalent; taken advanced courses in research methods, statistics and other topics relevant to their major fields of interest; participated in and led numerous seminars on research topics; designed several research protocols; completed at least one significant research project under the direction of a faculty mentor; made several presentations at national or international meetings; learned how to write a grant proposal; and submitted several papers for publication.

Academic Preparation - The MPH Requirement Trainees without an MPH or its equivalent matriculate into a relevant track at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. Such training or its equivalent represents a very important part of the overall traineeship program. Public health training provides trainees with a thorough grounding in biometrics skills, and in the art and science of disease prevention and control. Equally important to the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge, such training provides physicians and social and behavioral scientists with both the time and intellectual environment they will need if they are to broaden their perspective from one which focuses primarily on the characteristics and problems of individuals to one which also gives major attention to the community and how it affects individuals.

Academic Preparation at UCSF - UCSF provides a wealth of formal and informal educational opportunities related to AIDS. Early during the first year of the traineeship the Program Directors and mentor review with each trainee his or her overall educational needs that are to be met during the two- or three-year period and may recommend the Training in Clinical Research (TICR) courses, the Advanced Training in Clinical Epidemiology (ATCR), or individual courses in statistics or specific research methods, such as qualitative research. Every trainee is required to take a course in the ethical conduct of research during their fellowship. The intent is that every trainee, in addition to having excellent qualifications in his or her basic discipline, research methods and public health, also has a solid grounding in research ethics and the basics of HIV infection and AIDS. Moreover, whatever their area of special interest, e.g., medicine, social sciences, behavioral science, epidemiology or policy, trainees should be reasonably well acquainted with the fundamentals of the other areas. The traineeship experience should provide breadth as well as depth.

Commitment to Diversity - Applicants from communities of color, particular those from groups underrepresented in the health sciences, are especially welcome to apply to TAPS. The TAPS directors have a strong commitment, both through their research and through their mentoring and selection of fellows, to training people of color to work on disparity issues in HIV in the US.

Project Website: www.caps.ucsf.edu/CAPS/about/fellows/tapsindex.php