



The Value of Postgra

Developing Individuals, Organizations

By John M. Buell

No matter what role is served in a postgraduate fellowship program—whether as a fellow, preceptor or other senior executive who interacts with the fellow—the experience contributes to the development of future leaders and provides tangible benefits to the fellow, organization and profession.

One of the most valuable aspects of a postgraduate fellowship to the fellow is the opportunity to work with many of the sponsoring organization's senior executives—a level of exposure that is difficult for students to reach right out of graduate school. For the organization, the value it receives is the opportunity for many of its senior leaders to work with some of the brightest healthcare management students in the country who may provide fresh insight. And for the profession, the value is preparing a group of trained professionals who will become tomorrow's leaders.

Value for the Fellow

In the increasingly competitive healthcare job market, the experience gained through participation in a fellowship can provide a competitive advantage to the new careerist. The benefits of such planned practical experience include:

- Creating a low-risk environment in which the new careerist has the opportunity to translate theory into action
- Fostering an understanding of the profession through individual experience
- Enhancing the individual's existing skills, knowledge and experience
- Exposing the new careerist to decision making at the highest governance, corporate or executive levels at a point in his or her career when such opportunities would rarely be present otherwise
- Allowing the development of a mentoring relationship that can influence future professional development and career advancement

Gayle L. Capozzalo, FACHE, is the executive vice president, Strategy/System Development, at Yale New Haven (Conn.) Health System and preceptor for the organization's postgraduate fellowship program. Involved with fellowship programs for 25 years, Capozzalo says the primary benefit the fellow receives is exposure to senior management—something that cannot be duplicated any other way, both in the depth of senior management and breadth of the organization. “A fellowship provides someone the ability to



Postgraduate Fellowships: and the Profession



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learn management styles and how the organization functions on a day-to-day basis,” she says.

A postgraduate fellowship offers participants opportunities and experiences that their peers hired right out of college would not likely get. Yale New Haven Health System’s postgraduate fellowship program, for instance, connects its fellows to the corporate office in which they attend leadership meetings and are involved in system-wide projects, something newly hired graduates would not experience. In addition, the system’s fellows spend four months working at each of Yale New Haven’s three hospitals on a range of projects.

“The value to the fellow of this type of program is it gives him or her first-hand experience working in a multihospital health-care system,” says Capozzalo.

Working at a large and reputable organization appealed to Carolyn Miller, who in July finished a one-year fellowship at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She says her exposure to all levels of senior executives, both managerial and clinical, was the greatest benefit. “The executives at Rush were engaged in the fellowship program and willing to share information and advice openly, which made it an extremely positive experience. To learn from those who have such great knowledge was an irreplaceable opportunity.”

Miller received her master’s degree in health administration from the University of Iowa College of Public Health, which strongly encourages students to seek

postgraduate fellowships. She researched available fellowship programs using ACHE’s online Directory of Fellowships in Health Services Administration and talking with alumni who participated in fellowships. Miller applied to 12 programs across the country, having a particular interest in Rush University Medical Center because she grew up in the Chicago area. “I knew about Rush’s excellent reputation as a hospital and for its fellowship program.”

Most fellowship programs, Miller found, are rotational, program based or a combination of both. She selected Rush’s postgraduate fellowship program

because it was heavily project based, which gave her the opportunity to work on one major project for 12 months and several small projects throughout the year.

“Rush wanted fellows who would be self-starters, able to move through the organization, define their interests and start and seek

their own projects and project sponsors,” she says. “That appealed to me. I wanted to use my fellowship to develop my interests, competencies and skillsets while working at an academic medical center, which gave me exposure to many areas such as physician practice management, strategic planning and government affairs. The fellowship also provided countless opportunities for feedback from all levels of the organization.”

But before she could tackle any large-scale projects, Miller underwent six weeks of orientation in which she met with more than 60 of the organization’s top administrative and clinical leaders to learn what projects might

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—Gayle L. Capozzalo, FACHE,
Yale New Haven Health System



A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a man's face, focusing on his eyes and nose. He is wearing round, gold-rimmed glasses. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

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be available and if they matched her interests. She chose a yearlong work-force-planning project in graduate medical education (GME), which began to examine what the new mix of care providers would be for the new hospital Rush was building. That project increased in scope to involve a GME project with an area hospital.

“It became a complicated project but in a good way because it gave me exposure to both the educational mission of the organization and the financial and operational implications of having those programs,” says Miller.

University of Utah Hospitals & Clinics in Salt Lake City annually offers a one-year postgraduate fellowship in which the fellow rotates within the departments at its four hospitals and works on projects. CEO David E. Entwistle considers the fellow a student during the fellowship.

“The fellowship is a great way to help students gain an additional year of hands-on learning,” he explains. “Our fellowship program provides a global perspective of the organization in terms of rotating through the various departments and giving the student access to senior executives through rounding and participating in meetings. This gives the student an understanding of the healthcare environment and helps him decide what he wants to focus on. The value to the fellow is he or she gets the opportunity to participate as a member of the executive team, provide input and ask questions—it’s

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—Carolyn Miller, former
postgraduate fellow at
Rush University Medical Center



about being an active part of the leadership team.”

Value for the Organization

Fellowships benefit sponsoring institutions by allowing them to evaluate potential candidates for future leadership positions, exposing current management to interaction and exchange of

ideas with postgraduates or new careerists, and allowing opportunities for introduction of current academic theory and learning techniques.

Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE, CEO/director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Washington, D.C., oversees two fellows in its postgraduate fellowship program. In addition, he is responsible for several interns, is a mentor for the organization’s leadership development programs and serves as an executive coach at Georgetown University.

He says the VA’s fellowship program brings to the organization new talent who contribute fresh ideas and energize the staff. “If we value developing future leaders, then they will come to us for that nourishment and development, and they will choose to stay and be part of the organization.

“We keep the vast majority of our fellows when they finish their year-long program,” says Rivera. “And we get to see them go from entry-level positions to senior-level positions. For the VA, offering a postgraduate fellowship program is an investment. You have to believe that if you invest in these individuals, they will make your organization richer in many ways.”

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Adds the University of Utah Hospitals & Clinics' Entwistle: "Our commitment to them doesn't end when their fellowship ends. We use our program to screen for management talent for the organization. We have hired or placed many fellow candidates that have come through our organization."

But one of the greatest benefits fellows bring to the organization is their talent as young healthcare managers eager to plunge into projects, of which the VA, says Rivera, has many. "We try to push our fellows to the maximum," he says. "It's not unusual for them to work on multiple projects at one time."

It also is important that staff view the fellows as a vital component of the organization, says Rivera, which is why its fellows' offices are in the VA Medical Center's executive suite.

"We put them front and center," he says. "They have offices next to senior-level staff. We issue them BlackBerrys so that we are connected to them. They have open access to my office, and they can call and e-mail me anytime."

In addition to providing value to the organization, mentoring a fellow can also benefit a manager's career, says Yale New Haven's Capozzalo.

"Having mentored a fellow is a great thing to put on a resume," she says.

Value for the Profession

Fellowships benefit the field of healthcare management as a whole by

preparing a network of skilled professionals who will become the leaders and mentors of the future. University of Utah Hospitals & Clinics' Entwistle considers it an investment in the next generation of healthcare leaders.

"That's part of the onus we have in healthcare—to generate new people and interest in the field so that there are qualified people to replace us," he says.

Yale New Haven's Capozzalo agrees, pointing out that in her opinion senior executives have an obligation to identify high-potential young people who can become dedicated to the profession for the long run. "It reinforces the idea of fellowships and preceptorships, because as fellows climb within the profession, they remember the benefit they got out of their fellowship," she says. "And it generates a willingness to promote and offer fellowships at their organizations. It perpetuates the idea of providing opportunities for young people to assimilate quickly into the profession."

ACHE has promoted the benefits of postgraduate fellowships for more than 25 years.

"Healthcare management is a profession that is values driven," says Deborah J. Bowen, FACHE, CAE, executive vice president and COO of ACHE.

"ACHE members are highly committed to integrity, diversity, leadership excellence and lifelong learning," says Bowen. This is their professional choice, and ACHE looks for ways to bolster the knowledge, skills and ability of healthcare professionals.

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—Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE,
U.S. Department of Veterans
Affairs Medical Center



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“A fundamental value for healthcare executives is a commitment to lifelong learning, giving back to the profession, serving as a role model for others and growing leaders, which is a big part of what executives do and should do. Providing fellowships is an opportunity to fulfill that commitment while having the opportunity to shape the future of the profession,” says Bowen.

Anthony C. Stanowski, FACHE, vice president, Industry Relations, ARAMARK Healthcare, says fellowships also can help organizations reflect the populations that they serve.

ARAMARK Healthcare—in partnership with the Institute for Diversity in Health Management and ARAMARK Healthcare partner hospitals—sponsors one-year administrative fellowships that offer experience in hospital administration and in-depth exposure to

ARAMARK Healthcare’s national perspective on clinical support services.

The ARAMARK Healthcare Administrative Fellowship for Clinical Support Services focuses on the vital connection between the delivery of care and the environment where it is delivered. For the 2010 academic year, ARAMARK Healthcare offered six fellowship positions: two with Baylor Health Care System in Dallas, two with Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Ill., and one each at Main Line Health in Bryn Mawr, Pa., and Bon Secours Baltimore Health System.

The program is in its second year. Nearly 170 individuals applied to the program this year, a substantial increase from the year before when fewer than 50 applied.

“There needs to be diversity in the C-suite,” says Stanowski. “We are helping to make a change and to close the gap in access, treatment and outcome disparities among diverse populations, and ultimately to improve the overall healthcare of the nation. Hopefully, with our recruitment of minority students as part of the fellowship, we’re helping to increase the pool of administrative talent that will be running healthcare organizations in the future.

“We’ve learned over time that the only way we can truly succeed is to help make our clients and our industry better in every way—by making the connections that make a difference in their business,” he says. “The fellowships are one of those critical connections.”

John M. Buell is a writer with Healthcare Executive.

Ask the Expert

Have a question on this topic? Continue the discussion on the ACHE Message Board. Gayle L. Capozzalo, FACHE, executive vice president, Strategy/System Development, at Yale New Haven (Conn.) Health System, will take your questions on ACHE’s Message Board from Nov. 1 to Nov. 30. Responses will be posted each Monday. Visit ache.org/MessageBoard to post your question and view her response. When you post your question, please title the subject “HE Mag/Nov/Dec/fellowship [question here].”

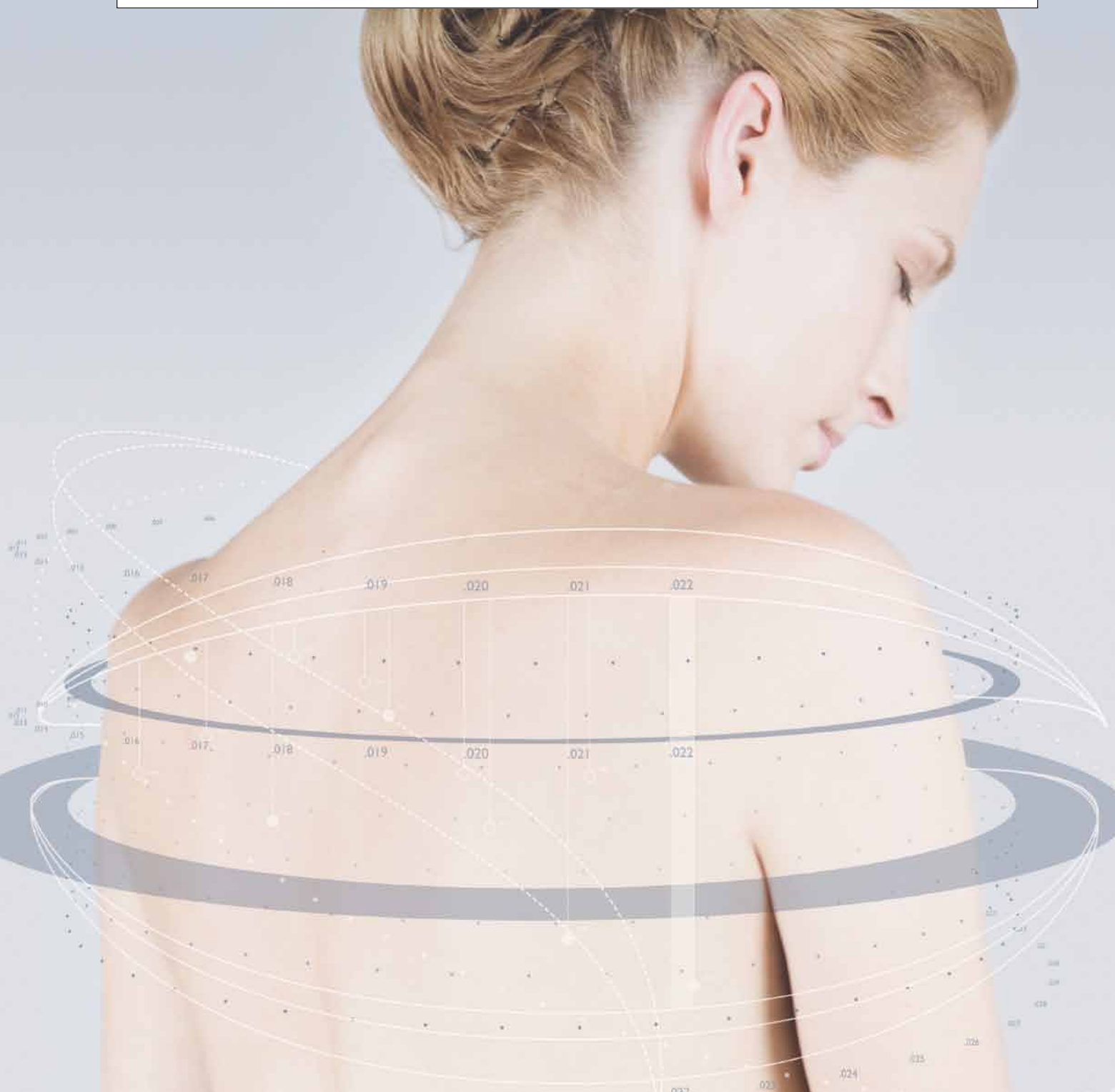
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ACHE Study: Fellowships Meet Expectations

Former postgraduate fellows, CEOs and academic program leaders say their experiences related to postgraduate fellowships were positive and met their expectations, according to a major ACHE study that examined the state of residencies and postgraduate administrative fellowships in the health-care management field.

Earlier this year, ACHE surveyed 4,166 ACHE affiliates, including recent graduates, affiliates with fellowship experience, CEOs and academic program leaders—and 1,897 responded, for a response rate of 46 percent.

Former postgraduate fellows considered the choice of a residency/fellowship to have been the right career decision, and the experience was typically seen as having had an immediate, positive impact on their careers. In fact, a residency or fellowship experience frequently led to an offer of a full-time position by the sponsoring organization.

Respondents believe that residencies and fellowships continue to be important and that they would encourage new entrants to the profession to undertake such experiences. Respondents also tended to believe that academic programs without a required residency should encourage students to seek a postgraduate fellowship and that senior healthcare executives have a professional obligation to help the next generation of leaders by offering residency and fellowship opportunities.

Demand Outpaces Supply

Interest among students attaining postgraduate fellowships continues to rise, but many report difficulties in finding residencies or fellowships, according to the survey. This finding corresponds with only 19 percent of CEO survey

respondents reporting that their organizations offer residency or fellowship opportunities.

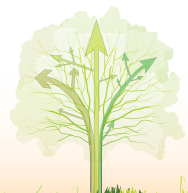
To reduce the gap between the demand for postgraduate fellowships and the supply, ACHE is collaborating with the Association of University Programs in Health Administration and the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education to reinforce their shared dedication to the importance of postgraduate fellowships.

“ACHE believes a renewed commitment to postgraduate fellowships is critical to the success of the profession,” says ACHE Executive Vice President and COO Deborah J. Bowen, FACHE, CAE. “The challenges healthcare managers face are becoming more complex each year, which is why it is important that healthcare organizations offer hands-on, practical experiences that bridge the gap between experience and learning.”

ACHE is formulating a comprehensive plan to promote the benefits of postgraduate fellowships to both potential fellows and sponsoring organizations. Currently, two resources are available: the Directory of Fellowships in Health Services Administration (ache.org/PGFD) and a set of guidelines for development of postgraduate fellowships (www.ache.org/pgfd/pgfd_guidelines.cfm).

In addition, if you have not listed your organization's program in the directory, you can do so by completing the online listing form at ache.org/PGFD. You may add a new listing or update a current one at any time.

Changes are reflected immediately. Once added, review the directory to ensure you don't have a duplicate listing.



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