DIDACTIC TRAINING

To produce future surgeon-scientists who will be competitive in academic surgical research, our training program offers a combination of formal and informal education. Fellows will be mentored by interdisciplinary research teams. All fellows supported by our training program will enroll in one of three degree-granting programs: 1) the Master of Medical Science (MMSc) program, 2) the Masters of Clinical Science (MCS), or 3) the new three-year PhD program. These degree programs also include training in the responsible conduct of research, data rigor and reproducibility, and biostatistics. In addition, fellows will participate in the regularly scheduled departmental research seminars, lectures, research journal club, surgical grand rounds and presentations/seminars sponsored by other departments such as the Division of Gastroenterology, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, the Sealy Centers, and the Institute for Translational Research.

UTMB & GALVESTON

As the first academic health center in Texas and among the oldest in the nation, the University of Texas Medical Branch campus includes six hospitals, a major medical library, classroom buildings, specialty centers, extensive research laboratories and office buildings, all of which advance UTMB's threefold mission to provide scholarly teaching, innovative scientific investigation, and state-of-the-art patient care. Galveston is a Texas Gulf Coast city with a semitropical climate and natural harbor, making it long favored as a tourist resort and port.

SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE UTMB GI TRAINING PROGRAM

- A greater than 40-year history of training junior faculty, residents, fellows and students.
- A nurturing environment with a proven track record for the development of surgeon scientists.
- An academic community at UTMB with established interest in GI-related diseases composed of faculty from multiple departments and centers.
- Our program is further enhanced by other centers and institutes at UTMB with overlapping interests which provide a rich resource for additional mentors and a different focus on problems.
- All fellows have the opportunity to complete requirements for an advanced degree. This rigorous program requires the fellow to work under the direction of a supervisory committee, thus increasing the interactions of our trainees with other scientists on campus.
- Fellows are mentored in not only the science of experimentation, but also the fine points of successful abstract and manuscript writing, how to prepare an effective presentation, and how to write successful proposals for funding. These aspects of the research are crucial to a successful academic career and are strongly emphasized in our program.

G.I. Laboratory Research Fellowship positions are now available for two years to qualified surgical residents who have an interest in academic surgery. Full-time stipends for these positions are supported by a National Cancer Institute T-32 training grant. Please direct any inquiries to and send letter of interest and C.V. to:

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409-772-1285

For more information, please contact us at: mhellmic@utmb.edu or 409-772-1285
The UTMB gastrointestinal (GI) training program is specifically focused on the inter-disciplinary training of young, academic surgeons interested in diseases of the GI tract, liver, and pancreas. The goal of the research training program is to provide a rigorous, scientific foundation and to prepare and mentor young, academic surgeons to be independent scientists. Our program represents an intensive and integrated two or three year research experience which offers the individual trainee a highly structured and mentored research experience in fundamental aspects in the study of GI diseases through one of two tracks: Basic Science or Clinical/Outcomes Research. All fellows have the unique opportunity to obtain formal education and an advanced degree in the area of their interest. Fellows learn to present the results of their studies in informal and national forums, to write manuscripts for publication, and to write competitive research grant proposals.

Since 1992, the program has trained 32 postdoctoral fellows. Of the 19 fellows that have completed their clinical training, 52% are currently in academic surgery, and half of those have successfully competed for NIH funding.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), a component of the University of Texas System, is the oldest medical school in continuous operation west of the Mississippi River. As a major academic health center, UTMB is dedicated to improving the lives of others through health sciences education, clinical care and biomedical research. Established in 1891 as the University of Texas Medical Department, UTMB has grown from one building, 23 students and 13 faculty members to a modern health science center with 77 major buildings, more than 2,400 students and more than 1,000 faculty. The 99-acre campus includes four schools, three institutes for advanced study, the first and only national laboratory in Texas devoted to the study of infectious diseases, a state-of-the-art Medical Research Building, a Level 1 Trauma Center, a major medical library, a network of hospitals and clinics that provide a full range of primary and specialized medical care, an affiliated Shriners Burns Hospital, and numerous research facilities.

In the modern medical era, the need for sustained support to develop surgeon-scientists committed to the study of surgical diseases in the gastrointestinal tract, liver and pancreas, has become more critical than ever. Historically, scientific advances based in surgical research have led to significant changes in the way we practice surgery and established interdisciplinary care as a standard for the management of complex medical problems. For example, basic and translational biomedical research has advanced our understanding of and impacted on the care of patients in the fields of solid organ transplantation, surgical critical care, trauma, cardiac surgery, burns, biomaterials, surgical oncology and molecular therapeutics.

Future innovations in the care of patients with diseases of GI tract, liver and pancreas rely on the bi-directional understanding of the basic science of the medical problem as well as the practical clinical management of such patients. Gaps in knowledge in the treatment of these problems can be bridged by basic and translational scientists who are well-equipped with the tools to perform patient-oriented research, the ability to communicate across disciplines with specialists in other fields of science and medicine, and a deep understanding of specific clinical problems that can be addressed by each of these specialists.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT