



Master of Science in Genetic Counseling (MSGC) Program

Supplemental Learning Activities

Genetic Counseling Leadership Seminar Series

Primary coordinators: Kwasi Boaitey, LCSW, PCC, PhDc & Audrey Schroeder, MS, CGC

Offered: Throughout length of the program

Required activity

Description: First- and second-year students will participate in a regular seminar series throughout the program, meeting every 1-2 months. This series facilitates exploration of leadership concepts and the leadership process. Through participation in this activity, students will develop better understanding of leadership processes and strategies, and appreciate the vast leadership opportunities and needs within the genetic counseling field, including those aimed at building diversity, equity, and inclusion within genetic counseling graduate programs, the genetic counseling profession, research, and health care. Each session will feature a guest who will engage in unpacking their leadership praxis as it pertains to genetic counseling and interdisciplinary practice.

Genetic Counseling Journal Club

Primary coordinator: Ericka Bliss, MS, CGC

Offered: Approximately twice per month, throughout length of the program

Required activity

Description: First- and second-year students participate in journal clubs throughout the program. Each student will present and lead journal club discussions to their classmates and program faculty. Each discussion topic will be selected by the student, and will include recent publications about advancements in genetic testing technology, policy updates, case reports, clinical research, or opinion articles. Each student will be expected to participate in the discussions if they are not presenting that month.

Attendance at Genetic Counseling Case Seminar I and Genetic Counseling Case Seminar II courses, 1st Year Students

Primary coordinator: Lindsay Adamczak, MS, CGC

Offered: Fall and Spring of 1st year

Required activity

Description: First-year students will attend regular one-hour seminars during which second-year genetic counseling students present and facilitate discussion based on real cases from their clinical rotations.



Interdivisional Genetics Conference

Primary coordinator: Existing clinical case conference for URMC genetics providers

Offered: Weekly, Summer through Spring of 2nd year

Required activity

Description: Students will attend and participate in the weekly interdivisional genetics conference which involves an interdisciplinary group of professionals and trainees within the University and Rochester Medical Center (URMC). Cases are presented by various genetics specialty groups including Pediatric Genetics, Neurogenetics, Adult Medical Genetics, Cancer Genetics, and Ocular Genetics. In addition, administrative and educational updates relevant to the field of medical genetics and genetic counseling are discussed. Non-genetics providers and other trainees are also typically in attendance.

2 Days of Clinical Observation with a URMC Genetic Counselor

Primary coordinator: Emily Calamaro, MGC, CGC

Offered: Fall of 1st year

Required activity

Description: First-year students will spend 2 clinics (on 2 different days) observing a genetic counselor during a genetics clinic at URMC. Each clinic will occur with a different genetic counselor and specialty. Through participation in this activity, students will develop greater understanding of the components and structure of genetic counseling visits, and how genetic counselors function as members of the healthcare team.

Laboratory Fieldwork with URMC Cytogenetics and Array Labs

Primary coordinator: Emily Calamaro, MGC, CGC

Offered: 1st year (2 weeks)

Required activity

Description: First-year MSGC students will have a 2-week laboratory fieldwork experience with the Cytogenetics and Array labs with UR Medicine Labs (2 half days per week). Students will tour and observe the laboratory workflow from specimen arrival through to issuing of test reports. Students will be provided with exposures to various test methods (karyotype, FISH and CMA (chromosome microarray)), protocols, and data analysis and interpretation. Through participation in the laboratory experience, students will develop greater understanding of the lab processes and develop skills that are important in the laboratory setting. In addition, students will come to recognize various professional roles in the broader healthcare system as it relates to the laboratory setting, and practice building working relationship with other member of the healthcare system. Primary faculty/staff involved for this supplementary rotation includes M Anwar Iqbal, PhD, FACMG (Director of Microarray CGH Laboratory and Associate Director of the Cytogenetics Laboratory), Bin Zhang, PhD, FACMG (Director of the Cytogenetics



Laboratory), Julie O'Malley (Cytogenetics lab supervisor), Mary Shaver (Microarray lab supervisor), and Min Guo, MD, PhD.

Day Observation with URM Social Work

Primary coordinators: Emily Calamaro, MGC, CGC & Carla LeVant, LMSW, URM Senior Social Worker

Offered: Fall of 1st year

Required activity

Description: First-year students will observe a social worker within URM. Through participation in this activity, students will develop greater understanding of the roles of Social Work within the medical center setting. Students will develop greater understanding of advocacy for individuals, families, and communities. Additionally, students will recognize various professional roles in the healthcare system and practice building working relationships with other members of the healthcare system.

Thesis Development Workshop

Primary coordinator: Audrey Schroeder, MS, CGC

Offered: March-April of 1st year

Required activity

Description: First-year students will participate in a Thesis Development Workshop (2-3 workshop meetings total) with their classmates and MSGC faculty members. Students will further develop and review research project ideas, receiving support and feedback from peers and faculty. Within this time frame, each student will confirm a thesis advisor (prior to start of GNC 491 Master's Research Thesis I course which begins in Summer semester).

Community Engagement Summer Programs (both a 40-hour Community Engagement Experience and Camp)

Primary coordinators: Ericka Bliss, MS, CGC & Celeste Wyman, ScM, CGC

Offered: Summer between 1st and 2nd years

Required activity

Description: The University of Rochester MSGC Program recognizes the importance of humanistic and community-oriented genetics care. The provision of this relies upon an in-depth understanding of the impacts of genetic conditions on the lived experiences of individuals and families, outside of the clinical setting. We value opportunities to spread public health awareness and build connections with the communities we serve. Each student will be expected to participate in two community engagement activities during the summer between their first and second years of the program. They will spend 40 hours individually at a local community organization of their choice, and participate in a regional camp. Camp participation will include 3 days at Camp Good Days and Special Times (summer camp for children with cancer or sickle



cell anemia) and/or one day at the University of Rochester Cleft & Craniofacial Camp. Both camps take place in July. For the 40 hours of volunteer activities with a community organization, faculty coordinators will facilitate connections with local, relevant community organizations. Students are also welcome to suggest another organization to work with, however, this is subject to approval by faculty coordinators. Students will be co-supervised by SMD faculty and point-persons on site at community organizations. After completion of participation requirements, a ‘retreat’ will be hosted by faculty for students to present and discuss their individual and group experiences. Students will also be required to submit a self-reflection essay regarding their individual 40-hour experiences.

Examples of participating community organizations include:

- 13thirty Cancer Connect
- Gigi’s Playhouse
- ABVI/Goodwill Finger lakes
- Flower City Down Syndrome Network
- Roc City Sicklers
- ARISE Adaptive Design
- Mary Cariola Center
- Empowering People’s Independence
- Rochester Ataxia Foundation

Advances in Genetic & Genomic Testing Seminar Series

Primary coordinators: Jordan Bontrager, MS, CGC & Allison Cox, PhD, FACMG

Offered: Spring of 2nd year

Required activity

Description: Second-year students will attend and participate in a 4-seminar series specific to genetic and genomic testing technologies and analyses. Topics will include chromosomal analysis (such as chromosome microarrays), multi-gene panel testing, whole exome/genome analysis, and epigenetic testing. Use of bioinformatics and computerized tools will be addressed. Relevant case examples and activities will be incorporated.

Career/Employment Workshops

Primary coordinators: Audrey Schroeder, MS, CGC & Eric Vaughn, MEd, Director of Career Services, Graduate Education & Postdoctoral Affairs, URSMD

Offered: 2nd year

Required activity

Description: Second-year MSGC students will participate in a workshop series (3 workshops) to further prepare for a genetic counseling career. Information regarding approaches to job search,



networking, interviews, negotiations, and CV preparation will be addressed. During this process, all students are expected to develop an updated CV.

Certification Exam Preparation Workshop

Primary coordinator: Audrey Schroeder, MS, CGC

Offered: Spring of 2nd year

Required activity

Description: Second-year students will participate in a workshop series (2-3 workshops) in the Spring semester. Through participation in this activity, students will develop greater understanding of American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) Certification Examination requirements, exam content, process, and resources. Strategies for exam preparation/studying will be reviewed. Practice examination questions will be provided.

Genetic Counseling Community Mentorship Program

Primary coordinator: Emily Calamaro, MGC, CGC

Offered: Throughout length of the program

Participation optional

Description: All MSGC program students within the University of Rochester have the opportunity to participate in this mentorship program, in which each student will be paired with a “community” genetic counselor mentor. Genetic counselor mentors currently work and/or live in the Rochester/Upstate NY region, or have been part of this community in the past. University of Rochester MSGC program faculty members and rotation supervisors will not serve as mentors. Mentors and mentees will be encouraged to meet (either in-person or virtually) approximately 2-3 times a semester, or as often as they choose.

Additional seminars, trainings, and other activities are offered regularly to enrolled students through the University (via myHub) and organizations within the University. Additional information is available at:

- Events posted through myHub:
<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/myhub-professional-development/events-news.aspx>
- Organizations: <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/trainee-handbook/activities-and-organizations.aspx>

Last updated 8/1/2024