



# Symposium on Educational Excellence 2024

## OHSU FERN: Advancing Mentorship and Career Education in Health Science

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### Keywords

Mentoring; Mentorship; Career development; Career design; Networking; Job Satisfaction; Faculty, Medical; Students; Staff Development

### Abstract

This interactive workshop delves into the FERN platform—a powerful networking and mentorship tool for OHSU students, staff, faculty, volunteers, and alumni. The session aims to explore and enhance mentorship and career education in health science, addressing four key objectives. Participants will gain skills and knowledge in:

1. Assessing personal networks to identify mentoring strengths and gaps in their existing networks.
2. Accessing resources to support equitable and effective mentorship and career design (Burnett, W., & Evans, D. J. (2018). *Designing your life: build a life that works for you*. Vintage Books)
3. Seeking career-related opportunities and building professional relationships through networking.
4. Identifying and discovering future paths and opportunities, including professional niches.

Participants will gain practical skills, such as crafting a mentoring statement for their profiles, and will be introduced to FERN's role within OHSU's career and mentoring frameworks (OHSU Career Development Workgroup: Framework Subcommittee, 2022, & adapted from Lunsford, Laura Gail. *The Mentor's Guide: Five Steps to Build a Successful Mentoring Program*. Second ed., Routledge, 2022). The workshop emphasizes a transformative approach to career education, focusing on developing individuals rather than simply offering transactional services. FERN (Facilitating Effective Relationships and Networks) is at the core, prioritizing a mentoring network model based on an evidence-based, interactive approach and eight mentoring domains that allow participants to identify unmet needs.

The session will delve into the significance of mentoring episodes, where mentees take center stage in bounded informational interviews to build specific skills. The FERN platform encourages diversity in networks, encompassing peers, long-term relationships, local and long-distance connections. This creates a rich, diverse mentoring ecosystem that keeps in mind both mentee and mentor values, skills, prior experiences, and their environment. Social capital in the form of mentoring relationships is highlighted as a conduit to real capital.

Career advancement will be discussed, emphasizing the value of reflection, exploration, and the role of building meaningful relationships. Accessible beyond traditional platforms like LinkedIn, FERN addresses the needs of individuals lacking pre-existing networks, bridging the gap for first-generation students and historically marginalized scholars.

The workshop also addresses the high impact of experiential learning opportunities and relationships in achieving career satisfaction and success. Mentorship & Career Design advocates for creating a culture that integrates career conversations and mentoring into daily work, fostering a sense of belonging and decreasing barriers to personal and professional development.

Lastly, the session will touch upon the National Mentoring Month Student Profile Challenge, highlighting ways to advance skills and the positive outcomes achieved by participants. Attendees are invited to envision the impact of FERN outside the workshop, reinforcing the idea that FERN is where OHSU affiliates belong, fostering meaningful relationships and navigating careers with confidence.