



## Reflections on Leading the DCRI Fellowship Program

**MATT ROE:** Hi, my name is Dr. Matthew Roe. I was the DCRI fellowship director from 2010 until 2020. I'm currently the chief medical officer at Verana Health.

**SANA AL-KHATIB:** Hello, I'm Sana Al-Khatib. I am a professor of medicine at Duke University Medical Center, and I am the director of the DCRI Fellowship Program. Within cardiology, my subspecialty is electrophysiology. I have been at Duke for many, many years since I did all my training at Duke and I stayed on faculty.

Mentoring trainees is such a dear thing to my heart. It brings me great pleasure. And so I've always, you know, had an affinity toward participating in the training and the mentorship and, you know, even the leadership of the fellowship program at the DCRI.

**MATT ROE:** I was very fortunate in my career to have excellent mentorship from several former DCRI directors, including Drs. Califf, Harrington, and Peterson. And their mentorship was so instrumental to my career development and my progress and my success that I just innately wanted to do the same thing to trainees who I could mentor.

**SANA AL-KHATIB:** So two of my top priorities for the DCRI Fellowship Program are to ensure diversity. And when I think of diversity, I don't only think of, you know, sex, race, ethnic diversity, which is obviously very important, but also making sure that we are including people of different backgrounds and different interests. And I think the more diverse we are, the better we are.

The second priority that I have is really thinking of the training program as a continuum. Yes, of course, the time that the DCRI trainees spend at the DCRI, is a very important phase, but I also believe that the time before they come to the DCRI and their time after leaving the DCRI are equally important. You know, first of all, making sure that we connect with these people early on to make sure that that transition into the DCRI Fellowship Program is a smooth one, but also as they transition out of the DCRI, making sure that they are equipped with the skillsets that they need to be successful, and we would want to track their success.

**MATT ROE:** You know, I had a motto that once a mentor, always a mentor. And that is, mentorship didn't stop when a fellow graduated from the program; it only just changed and evolved a different way. So I had the great fortune of mentoring several international fellows from a variety of different countries, and I've continued to stay in touch with them. We continue to do research collaborations over many years, I've stayed in touch with them personally.

What's so great to see is to watch these trainees evolve from a young faculty member to a mid-level to senior, and knowing that you had a big impact on that is just so important.

**SANA AL-KHATIB:** It's also important for us as mentors to have an open mind where we seek feedback and input from our trainees and our mentees so that we can do better, not in terms of you know, improving their experience, but how can we even, you know, take the program to the next level in terms of meeting the needs of the next generations, ensuring that we are, you know, pioneering in terms of



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research methods, training, mentoring, what have you. And, yes, we have a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge that we can tap into, but also listening to our mentees we can learn a lot, and we can implement a lot of changes that will make us better, make the program better for all.