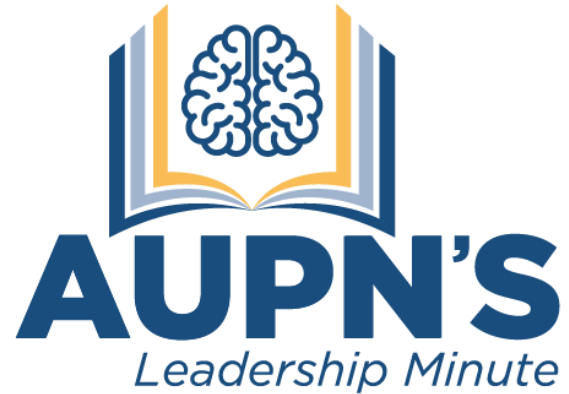




Donald S. Higgins, Jr. MD

Veterans Health
Administration
Albany Medical College



***Supporting K
Awardees***



Alexandra Nelson, MD, PhD

University of California
San Francisco

Leadership Minute Podcast Episode Description

K Awardees are in an exciting and pivotal period in their careers, building technical, communication, and mentoring skills to lead their own research teams. This period is also one of great vulnerability, with competing demands in their lives as scientists, clinicians, and teachers, as well as in their personal lives. The support of departmental leaders and faculty mentors is absolutely critical in helping K awardees navigate these potential barriers to develop their own creative and high-impact research program.

The Challenge

- A major honor, but major challenges lie ahead
- K Awardees range from postdoctoral fellows to leading an independent laboratory and mentoring their own trainees
- The K Award protects time, but does not fully fund a junior faculty member's salary or research costs
- Often building a family in parallel with building their careers
- Departmental support often makes the difference in staying in (or leaving) the physician-scientist career path

What K Awardees Need

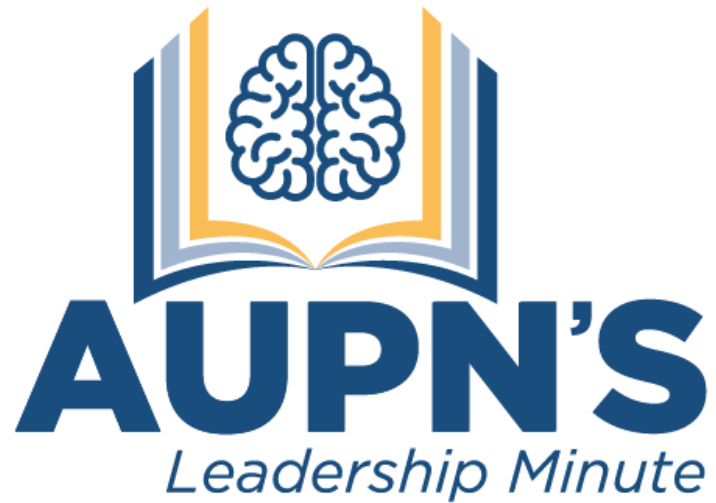
- To develop an independent and impactful line of research, they need protected time
- To master cutting edge and rigorous techniques, they need mentorship
- To improve scientific communication and grant-writing skills, they need one-on-one feedback as well as formal workshops

What K Awardees Want

- K Awardees are goal-oriented: Writing papers, submitting grants, going on the academic job market
- K Awardees also worry about the future: How will they fund their salary, fund their lab, pay for daycare?
- K Awardees are reassured by sharing the joy and the trials of the physician-scientist career with peers and mentors
- K Awardees are reassured by openness and transparency about expectations, including milestones, protected time, and funding

How You Can Deliver

- Whether your institution has 1 or 25 Neurology K Awardees, you can **strongly** impact their likelihood of career success and fulfilment
- Find ways to connect your K Awardees with each other or with those in other departments to promote camaraderie and shared purpose
- Create or help them to tap into existing resources for career development in your department and institution
- Meet with them individually to hear about their science but also their worries; help them to plan ahead for transitions and funding
- Create a climate of openness, transparency and mutual support



AUPN's Leadership Minute is brought to you by...

The Association of University Professors of Neurology

Copyright 2023