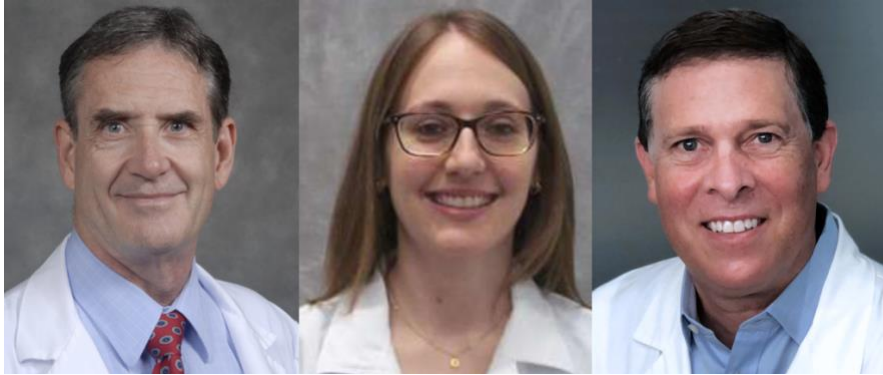


Questions for the 4C Coaches



By Edmund Duthie, MD; Amy Farkas, MD, MS; and David Marks, MD, MBA

In August 2019, the Kern Institute launched the **Coaching for Character, Caring and Competence (4C) Program**. This optional four-year longitudinal program pairs students with faculty coaches who will help to foster the student's professional growth. The faculty who serve as coaches volunteer their time to the program. The students and coaches have individual student-led meetings, and small group meetings to discuss topics such as character, professional identity formation and other topics that will help them through medical school and beyond. To help prepare the coaches for these discussions, monthly faculty development sessions are hosted where a content expert on each topic gives an hour session. Group meeting facilitation guides are provided for the coaches, as well.

We wanted to hear from the faculty about why they chose to participate in the 4C Program and the impact that this program has had on them. Three coaches, Drs. Edmund Duthie, Amy Farkas, and David Marks, submitted their responses to us on four questions about their experiences with the 4C Coaching Program.

What made you sign up for the 4C program?

Dr. Duthie: I signed up for 4C program to better connect with our students. A longitudinal approach was appealing.

Dr. Farkas: Joining the 4C program as a faculty coach seemed like a great way to pay it forward. I was part of a similar program as a first-year medical student at the University of Pittsburgh and I still mentor with my assigned faculty mentor thirteen years later. To offer that to the next generation of students was important to me.

Dr. Marks: The Kern Institute's recruitment for new 4C coaches occurred at an opportune time. As a physician administrator, I was heavily involved in COVID care as a leader in both the Incident and Recovery Command teams; I recognized the resumption of operations needed to include better care for our patients, caregivers, staff and learners as a whole. In my personal life, my daughter's medical school graduation was canceled, and though she was hooded "online," I recognized that this current medical school class would face unique challenges as a result of the pandemic's impact on education and socialization. I felt called to offer my services as a 4C Coach to pass on my experience and resilience having served many years as a clinician, and as a leader in both medicine and healthcare administration.

What has been the best part of the program?

Dr. Duthie: Getting to know a small group of M1s better and connecting me with the students, their challenges, and the curriculum.

Dr. Farkas: Getting to know the students and to watch the group dynamic. My students are great supports for each other, particularly in the time of COVID when so many normal social supports are removed. Knowing that they have connected outside of our 4C group is wonderful.

Dr. Marks: Our 4C group is composed of unique, talented individuals who are progressing remarkably through the challenges of M1 (and M3). Their personal and professional growth is tremendous. Coming alongside them and encouraging/coaching has been terrifically refreshing for me and I look forward to their ongoing formation as good physicians.

How has being a coach impacted you?

Dr. Duthie: I have achieved my goal of connecting with students. Unexpected benefits: getting to work with the near-peer coach has been great. Further, the faculty development has helped me to grow as a thoughtful educator.

Dr. Farkas: In the rest of my job, I am pretty removed from the first year of medical school. It's nice to have a reminder of what that time is like, as it provides me insights into where my MS3 and MS4 students are coming from so that I can better support them. It's also just a lot of fun.

Dr. Marks: The coaches' development sessions and curriculum turned my attention to the resources we have in the Kern Institute; exposure to these individuals and resources allowed me to seek new opportunities of study and growth for myself. I was particularly drawn to discussions of [character](#) which prompted thoughts on how clinical operations,

artificial intelligence (AI), and patient care are at risk by new technology. Adoption of artificial intelligence can pose challenges for safe, compassionate, and ethical health care. I wanted to explore if appropriate implementation and use of these tools could be addressed with character education and wisdom. This path ultimately led me to apply to become a Kern Scholar and pursue additional training in character education.

Why would you recommend other faculty join the program as a coach?

Dr. Duthie: Definitely would recommend. It is a commitment, but grounds us in why we are a medical school and why we became physicians.

Dr. Farkas: Absolutely! Seeing the students' excitement and watching them develop over the last year has been very fulfilling. I look forward to helping them on their journey over the next few years.

Dr. Marks: I highly recommend the mentor position in the 4C program as a means to give back to learners and to stimulate one's own understanding of the current challenges faced by our caregivers. The program has proved to be rewarding not only as I provide counsel and guidance, but also as I gain insight and wisdom from my colleagues. Additionally, the tools that the Kern Institute provide are important and relevant to our broader medical and administrative community.

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