

Professional Development for Research Professionals: A Crash Course (From Folks Still Figuring It Out, Too)

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THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL



Network for Research Professionals

A Quick Word:



This presentation will be recorded and available on the NRP website



Please keep your lines muted during speaker presentation



You may enter your questions into the chat or come off mute if you have a question

Objectives

- Encourage participants to actively engage in and take ownership of their professional development journey.
- Identify key self-reflective questions to guide the creation of a personalized professional development plan.
- Explore professional development opportunities at UNC and beyond.
- Discover funding sources to support your professional growth.
- Engage in peer-to-peer learning by gaining insights into others' approaches to professional growth.

Outline

- What is professional development?
- Developing a professional development “plan”
- Professional development opportunities
- Funding opportunities
- Insights from colleagues on their professional growth journeys

What is Professional Development?

Professional development is the intentional and ongoing process of building the knowledge, skills, and experiences that help you grow in your current role and prepare for future opportunities.

What is Professional Development?

- Knowledge growth
- Skill building
- Experience and exposure
- Networking and collaboration
- Reflection and goal setting

What is Professional Development?

- Formal vs. informal
- Self-paced vs. structured
- Individual vs. collaborative
- Theory-based vs. real-world application
- Goal does not have to be career advancement

Why is it Important?

- Staying current
- Increased job performance
- Maintaining credentials
- Career advancement
- Competitiveness

“The universe has its own agenda”

“Plans are the illusion of control”

*“Life is what happens when you're busy
making other plans”*

“You make plans, the universe laughs”

Developing a Professional Development Plan

-  Self-Reflection: Where Are You Now?
-  Goal Setting: Where Do You Want to Go?
-  Skill Building: What Do You Need to Learn?
-  Resources & Support: What Will Help You Get There?
-  Evaluation/Accountability: How Will You Stay on Track?

Self-Reflection: Where Are You Now?

- What are my current strengths and skills?
- What feedback have I received from peers, mentors, or supervisors?
- What aspects of my work do I enjoy most—and least?
- What are my current responsibilities, and how do they align with my long-term goals?

Goal Setting: Where Do You Want to Go?

- What are my short-term and long-term career goals?
- What roles or responsibilities do I aspire to take on?
- What kind of impact do I want to make in my field?
- What does success look like for me in 1, 3, or 5 years?

Skill Building: What Do You Need to Learn?

- What skills, certifications, or experiences are required for my desired role?
- Are there gaps in my knowledge or competencies I need to address?
- What trends or innovations in my field should I be aware of?
- What soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership) could I strengthen?

Resources & Support: What Will Help You Get There?

- Who can support or mentor me in this journey?
- What professional development opportunities are available (courses, conferences, workshops)?
- How can I make time for learning and growth within my current schedule?
- What budget or funding options exist for training or education?

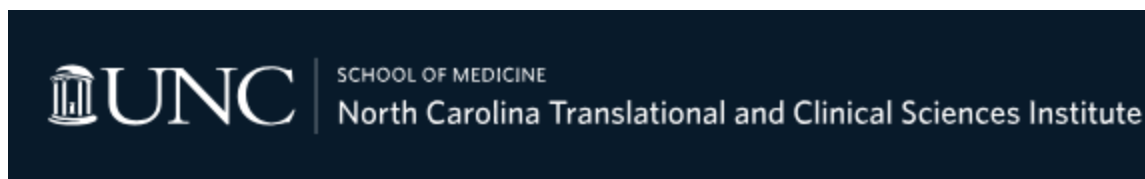
Evaluation/Accountability: How Will You Stay on Track?

- How will I measure progress toward my goals?
- What milestones or checkpoints can I set?
- How often should I revisit and revise my plan?
- What will I do if my goals or interests change?

Professional Development Opportunities



FDA



Funding Opportunities

- [NRP Professional Development Awards](#)
- [Janet B Royster UNC System staff scholarship](#)
- [UNC awards](#)
- NC TraCS
- Department funding
- PI funding
- University's [education benefits](#) or UNC Health's [educational assistance benefits](#).

2024-2025 NRP PDA Recipients

Name	Title	Department	Activity
Stephanie Morales	CCRP, Clinical Research Coordinator	Exercise and Sport Science	Association of Clinical Research Professional (ACRP) certification as a Certified Clinical Research Professional (CCRP)
Jenni Detwiler	Research Program Manager	UNC Center for Health Equity Research	Certificate Program in Implementation Practice
Arieska Diaz	MFM Ultrasound Tech	OBGYN Global Health	48th Annual Greenbaum-Kremkau Advanced Ultrasound Seminar: OB & GYN
Kobi Iheoma	Clinical Research Assistant	TEACCH	Association for Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies (ABCT) Annual Convention
Hannah Puckett	Research Assistant	OBGYN - Global Health	The Association for Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP): Industrialized Membership
Brittany Fecteau	Perinatal Research Sonographer	OBGYN - Global Health	OB/GYN Conference/Seminar 2025 AIUM
Julia Heinly	Research Assistant	TEACCH Autism Program	Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) 58th Annual Convention
Leah Gardner	Research Project Manager	North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute	Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification via Project Management Institute (PMI)



48th Annual Greenbaum-Kremkau Advanced Ultrasound: OB & GYN Conference

Supported by the NRP Professional
Development Award

February 2025 | Orlando, FL

Brittany Fecteau, Perinatal Research
Sonographer

Why I Chose This Organization

- The Greenbaum-Kremkau Advanced Ultrasound Conference is a nationally recognized event focused on advanced techniques in OB and GYN sonography.
- I chose this conference because it aligned directly with my current role as a perinatal research sonographer, offering cutting-edge updates on fetal imaging, fetal assessment, and Doppler techniques.
- The opportunity to learn from leading experts in both clinical and research applications of ultrasound was invaluable for expanding my technical and analytical skills.

About the NRP Award & Application Process

- I learned about the **NRP Professional Development Award** through my supervisor's recommendation.
- The application encouraged staff to pursue learning experiences that enhance professional growth and strengthen research quality.
- I applied highlighting my interest in advancing ultrasound research standards and improving image acquisition consistency across studies.
- The award partially funded my attendance at the Greenbaum-Kremkau conference.

Impact on My Role and Career

- The sessions improved my understanding of advanced imaging interpretation, helping me refine fetal biometry and Doppler waveform assessments in our research protocols.
- I've incorporated several workflow and documentation improvements learned during the conference into our daily scanning and training processes.
- Long term, this experience supported my goal of moving into a more advanced/supervisory role within clinical research and maternal-fetal imaging.

Fun Facts, Takeaways & Advice

- **Fun Fact:** The conference featured a live ultrasound scanning demo by Dr. Kremkau himself—showing innovative approaches to difficult fetal views.
- **Professional Development Tip:** Engage directly with speakers and vendors—these conversations often lead to new techniques or collaborations.
- **Advice for Those Seeking a Career in Clinical Research:**
 - Stay curious—there’s always something new to learn in imaging and data analysis.
 - Build strong relationships with both the clinical and research sides of your team.
 - Seek professional development opportunities like this award—they can open doors to new expertise and confidence in your work.



NRP Professional Development Award

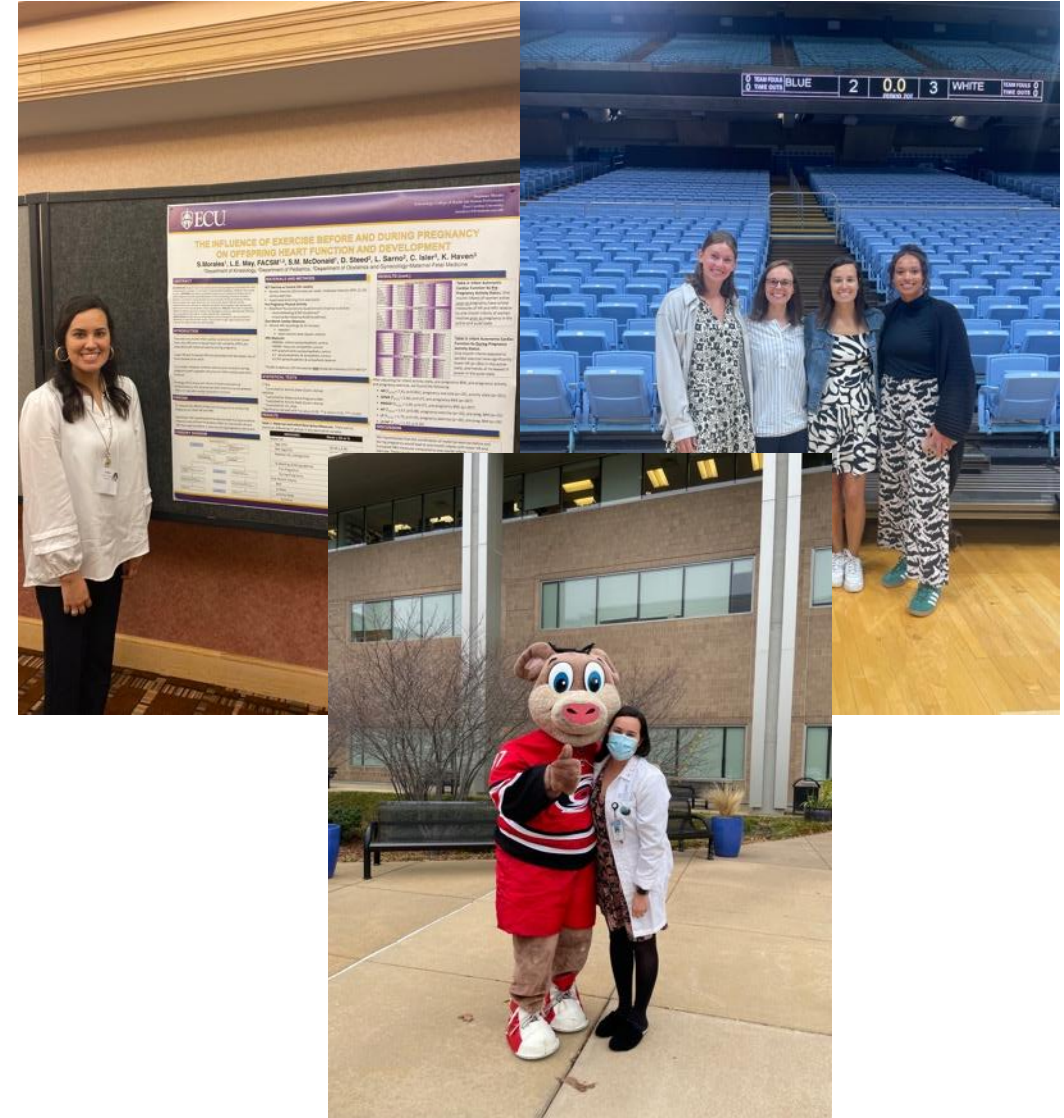
Stephanie Morales, MS, CCRC®
Matthew Gfeller Center,

No COIs to Disclose

About Me/Research Background

About Me

- First Exposure to Research
 - Grad School
- Experience at UNC
 - LCCC, Bone Marrow Transplant
 - Matthew Gfeller Center

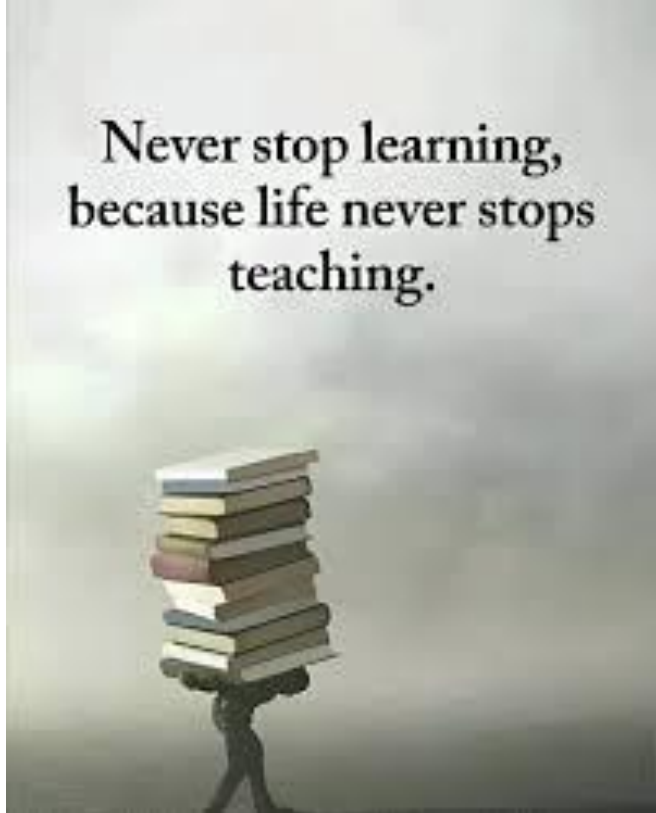


NRP Professional Development Award

- Obtained ACRP Certified Clinical Research Coordinator
 - 2 pathways for Eligibility
 - 1: Work Experience
 - 2: Work Experience + Waiver
- Study Habits
 - Examination Course Outline on ACRP Website
 - ICH/GCP Guidelines
- Maintenance
 - Good for 2 years
 - 24 CE Credits Or Maintenance Exam

- Why I recommend:
 - This Certification enhanced my skills and provided me with the resources to continue performing in my role to a high-quality standard. By earning my certification, I can better serve both my study team and our research participants.

Closing



- NRP
- Employee Forum
- Janet B. Royster Memorial Staff Scholarship Fund
- Department Funds
- Organization/Association Scholarships
- Tuition Waivers
- Carolina Talent

Additional Resources

Save the Date!



LinkedIn Profile, Networking, and Digital Presence

*Presenter: Justin Golding, Assistant Director of Career Education
UNC Career Center*

Date: Friday, November 7th, 2025
Time: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM (Hybrid)

Career Services and Support

- [Forage](#)
 - Free job simulations

Evaluation

Post-session evaluation:

Link <https://go.unc.edu/NRPOctEval> in the chat
or scan the QR code.

Attendance Certificate: An option to **download** certificate, before submitting the eval, is located within the post session eval survey.

Email: NRP@unc.edu if further questions or suggestions for future education.



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