

EARLY CAREER JOURNEY



STS Career Development Task Force
2024 TweetChat on

So, You Want To Become A Program Director

Moderated by Dr. Mara Antonoff

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THE HUB 

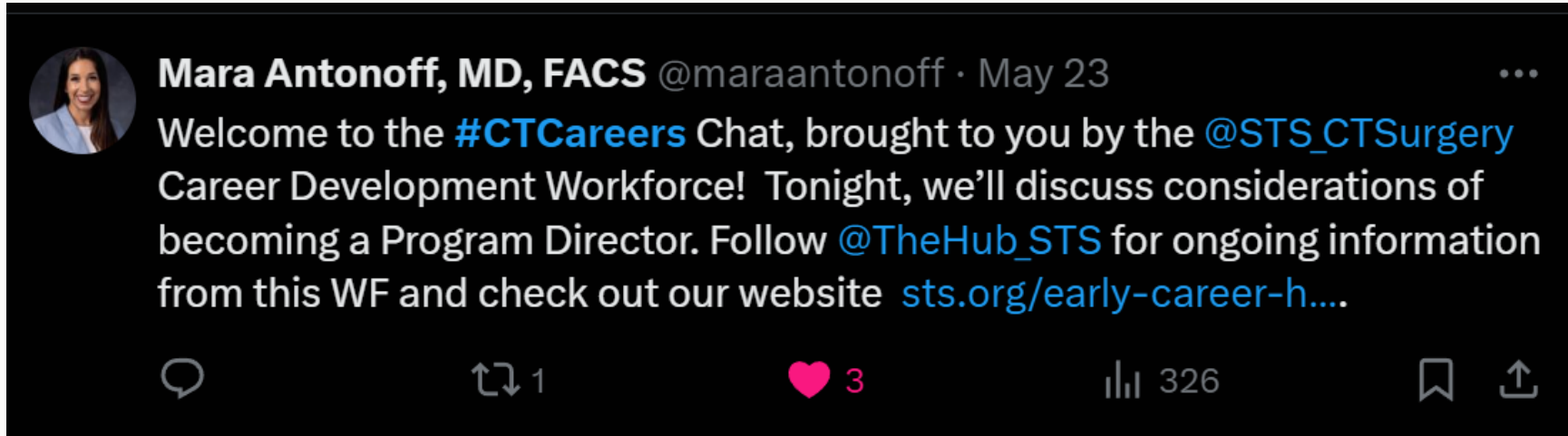
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Each quarter, the STS Career Development Communications Task Force hosts a TweetChat on topics important to early career cardiothoracic surgeons. It's an opportunity for Task Force members to connect directly with early career surgeons and share insights in real time.

What follows is a recap of the TweetChat on **So, You Want To Be a Program Director**, moderated by Dr. Mara Antonoff in May 2024. Opinions expressed in this chat are those of its contributors and don't necessarily reflect the views of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons.


STS Career Development Task Force members participated in the discussion, which **reached more than 1.9 million people**.

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T1: What's the difference between being an educator and having an education-focused career?

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 **Robert Van Haren, MD** @rvanharen · May 23

T1 most surgeons teach students as part of their job in the OR and clinic. The distinction is getting involved in leadership and administration roles that are focused on education [#CTCareers](#)

3 5 714

 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

T1: From my perspective, this means directing your research and leadership pathways toward education, beyond simply participating as a teacher or instructor. It becomes more about your career than just those you teach. [#CTCareers](#)


1 1 3 633

 **Robert Van Haren, MD** @rvanharen · May 23


Replying to @maraantonoff

T1 agree! One way of thinking of it is moving from teacher to principal [#ctcareers](#)

1 3 4 411

 **Brian Mitzman, MD MS FACS** @BrianMitzman · May 23

T1: totally agree with @rvanharen. Most surgeons teach and are educators. Having an education focused career means formal leadership or education research to advance the field [#CTCareers](#)



2 8 702

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Gavitt Woodard @GavittWoodard · May 23

We are all educators. As a surgeon you have things to teach Students, Residents, fellows, PAs , OR nurses.

Opportunity to teach every day even if you don't have an education focused career



↻ 2



3

📊 1.1K



Olugbenga Okusanya MD @okusanyamd · May 23

T1: educators work on mastering teaching. Education-focused is about the the entire construct of knowledge transmission, retention and application



↻ 1



3

📊 348



Prabhas Tej @ImPrabhasTej · May 23

Like the "Guru" perfect!



2

📊 15



Rajika Jindani, MD, MPH, MS @RajikaJindani · May 23

T1: an educator takes time to create a productive learning environment and goes the extra mile to identify where gaps of knowledge are and how to address them. An education-focused career can encompass that, but relies on how the faculty member approaches educating students



↻ 1



4

📊 338



Lyndon Walsh @LyndonCWalsh · May 23

Replying to @maraantonoff @TomVargheseJr and 7 others

T1 From a student's perspective, there are a lot of educators but individuals with education-focused careers have invested extra time into learning how to improve their teaching and effectively connect with/guide students. Emphasis on the last part! #CTCareers



1



2



6

📊 539



**T2: What are the
job expectations
of a program
director?**

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 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

T2 response: PDs have authority and accountability for the day-to-day functionality of the training program, including didactics, rotation schedules, educational objectives, trainee wellness, mentorship, support, conduct of program evaluation... [#CTCareers](#)

  1  1  359  

 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

T2: PDs are responsible for implementing strategies for compliance with ACGME rules, including trainee recruitment, supervision, evaluation, promotion, duty hours, and responding to directives from multiple governing bodies. What else? [#CTCareers](#)

 2  2  7  1.4K  

 **Joseph D. Phillips, MD FACS** @jdphillipsMD · May 23

Replying to @maraantonoff

A2. #1 be an advocate for the residents!
[#CTCareers](#)

  2  1  372  

 **Brian Mitzman, MD MS FACS** @BrianMitzman · May 23

T2: I think the key word is accountability. Regardless of who the other educators are, the formal training and outcomes fall on your shoulders.
[#CTCareers](#)



That's on me.

 1  1  9  617  

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 **Olugbenga Okusanya MD** @okusanyamd · May 23

T2. I think the pd sets a big part of the culture of the program. How the trainees relate to the faculty and vice versa. #ctcareers

2 2 8 599

 **Crystal Zhang, MD, MPH** @CrystalZhangMD · May 23

This really resonates~ #CTCareers

 **Olugbenga Okusanya MD** @okusanyamd · May 23

Replying to @maraantonoff

T2 A great PD feels like an involved parent. Clearly an authority figure but has your best at heart. #ctcareers

3 150

 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

Here's the bigger part of question T2: What are the "unofficial" roles of PDs – that may not be written in the common program requirements, but tend to fall in their laps. What examples have you seen???? #CTCareers











kulfyapp.com

GIF

3 2 7 1.6K







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 **Jonathan Spicer MD PhD**  @DoctorJSpicer · May 23
Replying to @maraantonoff @TomVargheseJr and 7 others
I wish I knew! But it definitely has something to do with how much time and energy one commits to helping others learn.







   2  244  


 **Gavitt Woodard** @GavittWoodard · May 23
Replying to @maraantonoff
We are all educators. As a surgeon you have things to teach Students, Residents, fellows, PAs , OR nurses.







Opportunity to teach every day even if you don't have an education ...
[Show more](#)


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


 **Panos N. Vardas** @pannvar · May 23
Resolution of conflict between senior and junior residents, remediation and assistance of rebuilding a broken relationship between a faculty and a resident, assistance with hardship (family, financial,etc) to name few..
[#CTCareers](#)

 1  2  8  370  

 **Mike Eisenberg** @DrMikeEisenberg · May 23
Replying to @maraantonoff
T2: PDs have unique insight to difficulties trainees experience (training, family, financial, etc) and ability to mentor/guide in ways that their peers in the department cannot. [#CTCareers](#)

  3  5  689  

 **Prabhas Tej** @ImPrabhasTej · May 23
¹⁰⁰ agree! IMO mentorship is the pivotal for successful legacy!

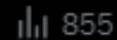
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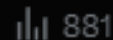
Robert Van Haren, MD @rvanharen · May 23

A2 PDs are responsible for running a educational program that produces fully trained Cardiothoracic surgeons that are ready for independent practice and care of patients [#ctcareers](#)



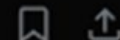
Busra Cangut, MD, MS @BusraCangutMD · May 23

T2: From a resident standpoint, PDs often take on several unofficial roles that are crucial for the functioning and morale of a residency program such as conflict mediator , mediate conflicts between residents, attendings, and other healthcare staff. [#CTCareers](#) [#CTsurgery](#) [#MedEd](#)



Ziad Awad, MD, FACS @ziadtawad · May 23

Shouldn't this be the norm practice for any speciality?



**T3: What might be
the stepping stones
to becoming the
next PD?**


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 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23
T3 response: IMHO, lots of ways at local, national, and career development level. Locally, take accountability for aspects of the curriculum or get involved in educators groups. #CTCareers @STSCtsurgery @TheHub_STS


1 reply 2 likes 479 retweets

 **Busra Cangut, MD, MS** @BusraCangutMD · May 23
Replying to @maraantonoff
T3: Advocating for residents wellness, showing a commitment to resident well-being by developing and supporting wellness initiatives. #CTCareers #CTsurgery #MedEd #SoMe


2 replies 6 likes 697 retweets

 **Robert Van Haren, MD** @rvanharen · May 23
Replying to @BusraCangutMD and @maraantonoff
T2 #ctcareers great point! problem solving, negotiating are huge part of being a PD, there is always something that needs your attention

1 reply 3 likes 415 retweets

 **Panos N. Vardas** @pannvar · May 23
Replying to @maraantonoff and @TheHub_STS
Resolution of conflict between senior and junior residents, remediation and assistance of rebuilding a broken relationship between a faculty and a resident, assistance with hardship (family, financial,etc) to name few.. #CTCareers

1 reply 2 retweets 8 likes 370 retweets

 **Erin A Gillaspie, MD, MPH, FACS** @ErinGillaspie · May 23
Replying to @CrystalZhangMD @APDSurgery and @Surg_Education
T3: Love this!! Also it isn't just education of those junior to you, it's education of peers, colleagues learning new skills and patients!! Education touches everything we do!! #CTCareers

2 replies 7 likes 395 retweets

 **Robert Van Haren, MD** @rvanharen · May 23
T3 5 years of practice as faculty is talked about as "requirement" #CTCareers

2 likes 97 retweets

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 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

T3: You will want to develop your own section of your CV related to education, as well as to track your own Education Portfolio:
[journals.lww.com/academicmedici...](https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine) #CTCareers



journals.lww.com
The Education Portfolio : Academic Medicine
An abstract is unavailable.

1 5 8 1.2K

 **Mike Eisenberg** @DrMikeEisenberg · May 23

Replying to @maraantonoff


T3: From a resident's perspective its easy to see when faculty are overburdened/burnt-out. Its challenging to look after the needs of others if you're running on fumes, so be sure to take time to recharge your batteries!
#CTCareers

3 10 643

 **Crystal Zhang, MD, MPH** @CrystalZhangMD · May 23

T3 Response: Engaging in education research and being involved in advancing medical education starting with one's own institution. Joining @APDSurgery and @Surg_Education. Involvement in #CTCareers TweetChats like this and connecting with other passionate educators!

2 2 6 785

 **Olugbenga Okusanya MD** @okusanyamd · May 23

Replying to @maraantonoff

T3 Be an APD! Usually low barrier to entry and you can learn a lot for that next step. #ctcareers

5 208

 **Mara Antonoff, MD, FACS** @maraantonoff · May 23

T3 response: For your own career development, you can do education research, do additional certificates, get involved with @Surg_Education, consider the ASE Surg Educ Research Fellowship (SERF), and participate in tweetchats! #CTCareers

1 5 666

**T4: What sets apart the
good PDs from the
great?**

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 **Joseph D. Phillips, MD FACS** @jdphillipsMD · May 23




I'M LOOKING FOR PASSION!

SANDITON MASTERPIECE

1

22

 **Olugbenga Okusanya MD** @okusanyamd · May 23


Replying to @maraantonoff

T4 Being a human while being an effective administrator which is an incredible balance. Keep the main thing the main thing. What is in the best interest of pedagogy. #ctcareers

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678

 **Erin A Gillaspie, MD, MPH, FACS** @ErinGillaspie · May 23

T4: for me it's personalized education!! Helping you to identify your strengths, weakness and opportunities and then working with you, structuring your program to make you the best you can be!!! I think the other piece is connecting you to people who can help you to develop!!!

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120

 **Robert Van Haren, MD** @rvanharen · May 23

A4 tough question, trying to figure this out now. I think providing stability in the program and always advocating for trainees #CTCareers

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557

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Rajika Jindani, MD, MPH, MS @RajikaJindani · May 23



T4: having empathy! Understanding trainees learn and engage in different ways and structuring the program to be accessible to the current residents. Also, being aware of the residents goals and acting as a sponsor to aid their success! #ctcareers



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❤ 10

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Mike Eisenberg @DrMikeEisenberg · May 23



Replying to @maraantonoff

T4: The best PDs are organized, action-oriented, and patient. Residents can quickly become disillusioned if a PD doesn't remember any of the details of a meeting they had with them. This is compounded if the moon is promised without action. Lastly, we are all learning. #CTCareers



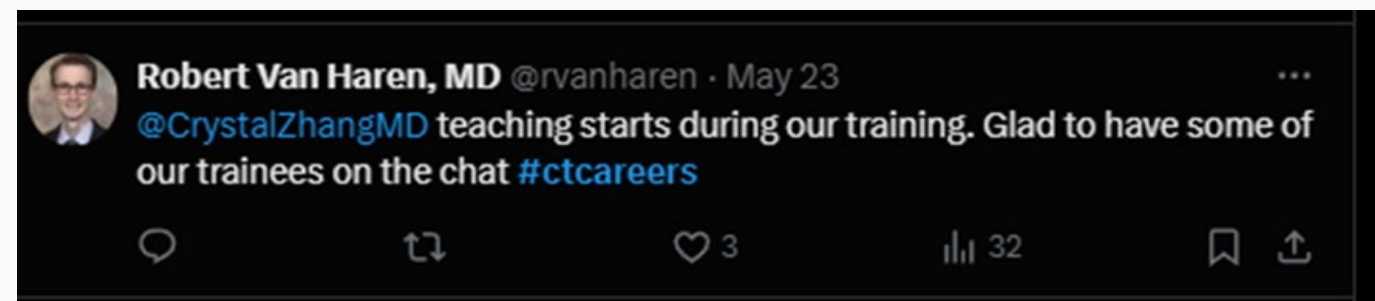
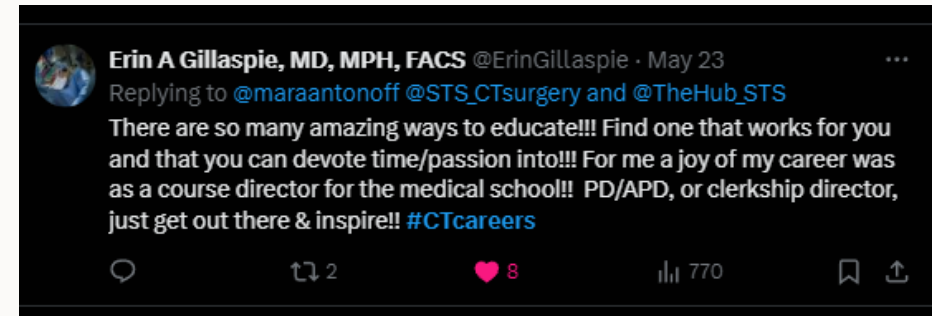
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A career in education resources available from STS:

- [How To Kick Start A Career in Education](#)
- [Teaching as an Early Career Surgeon:
The View from the Other Side of the Table](#)
- [Putting Together an Educator's Portfolio for
Promotion](#)