



Interview with Dr. Saam Morshed

Associate Professor, University of California, San Francisco
Director of Clinical Research, Orthopaedic Trauma Institute

1. How much of your professional time do you dedicate to global orthopaedic work and how has it changed over your career?

On any given week, I spend maybe about 5-10%, between research and education programs. However, that does not include the surgical education trips, where I travel for weeks at a time. I do not know how I would really factor all of that in.

2. How often do you go weeks at a time? That is difficult to balance with your position.

I would say twice a year I go for one to two weeks.

3. And has that changed?

I do it more now because I have more junior partners to cover my load.

4. How do you logistically work this in beyond just having junior partners who cover you? How do you do your clinic differently? How do you schedule your OR differently?

It is absolutely a group commitment because several of my partners are also deeply involved with this. We have dedicated academic time and part of that academic time, I just choose to spend on this work, rather than any number of other educational, research, and academic things that I could be doing. That redundancy in a large trauma group lends itself to springing me or any of my other five partners who are regularly doing this kind of work.

5. Do you feel everybody is doing equal amounts of it, or is it different depending on seniority?

I think it depends a little bit on level of involvement. If you are doing some teaching, that is a certain amount of time. If you teach and do some research, that counts for a little bit more of your time. We do not each have a designated amount of time. Ultimately it kind of comes out of our professional fees. The goal is going forward, that funding will be secured to explicitly fund percentages of faculty time to do this kind of work. So that is very much the goal.

6. Do you have any advice for people on how to start or transition what they did as trainees into being an attending?

I think you should make explicit your goals to your future employer about what you want to do. And there may not be a pathway to spending half of the year in a partnering institution within a different country. Most people are not hiring for that



particular 50% of a faculty member. But you can work towards it. You can come up with an arrangement that covers maybe a smaller percentage of your time. Most academic institutions that are hiring folks into an academic position will promise a certain amount of academic time, and you make it clear this is what you want to do with that time. You kind of create a pathway that explains how you are hoping to buy back more of that time, if your goal really is to spend a quarter of the year or half a year somewhere else. It does take an enlightened future employer to see that pathway.

7. Are there specific things that you should do or propose as metrics to help?

I think that is a really good question. I think that those sorts of arrangements, at this point, have to be developed with your employer. I think different department chairs and division chiefs have different ways of measuring productivity and I think what you could deliver is program development. Development or leadership of an international rotation. Vetting of the sites. At some point, it's kind of about numbering how many residents went overseas, how many sites that I worked to vet and develop MOUs with, the number of courses that I have run or I have participated in, and other logistical collaborations. There is the usual currency of publications and grant which are a little bit harder to come by. Honestly, we are still navigating that landscape. So, a lot of it will be foundation or private funding, and we are just learning how to do all of that ourselves right now. Looking to private foundations with whom this sort of work resonates. So, it may have to be a little bit open-ended, but, I think you can start with some of those things that you can actually count. Ultimately, you need to show the value of what you are doing. Fortunately, our program is sought after by prospective residents for our international programs, we have had AAOS and OTA recognition of our programs through Humanitarian and Research Awards, these things bring recognition to a program that help win over department leadership.