

Spotlight on Service: Jeff Baker – The Man Behind the Data



For more than two decades, Jeff Baker has been an indispensable but mostly invisible force at UVA, bringing deep expertise, reliability, and a strong service-oriented mindset to his work. Jeff's foundational role in the success of the Graduate Programs Office (GPO), and the federally funded training programs it supports, has been recognized in the past with the Leonard W. Sandridge Outstanding Contribution Award, the highest honor the University bestows on staff.

Jeff provides critical data tracking and table-generation support for a broad range of NIH-funded initiatives, including 12 active NIH T32-funded pre-doctoral or mixed pre-/post-doctoral training grants, as well as several postdoctoral and clinical fellow-only T32s outside the

GPO's core portfolio. He also supports 1–4 new T32 grant applications each year. Those who have written or reviewed training grants will understand the complexities of these tables, which include information on faculty funding and mentoring experience; other training awards at the institution; the pool of available trainees; and, in the case of renewals, first and current positions and any subsequent grant funding successes for the prior 15 years of trainees. In every case, accurate, well-presented data is essential for the competitiveness of these training grant applications.

Jeff's work extends to supporting the renewals and new applications for 1–3 NIH grants to support our summer training programs. With his efforts, the GPO has assisted with 16 active training grants and one center grant, along with five additional unfunded submissions, reflecting the scope and persistence required in today's funding landscape. Taken together, his efforts have helped secure millions of dollars in annual grant funding for SOM programs.

Jeff's impact is grounded in a diverse 20+ year career at UVA, with experience spanning student services, database management, and IT support. That breadth allows him to anticipate needs, solve problems efficiently, and support colleagues across disciplines.

In his personal life, Jeff is also a widely-published poet. His works have been anthologized in *Best New Poets 2010* and *The Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VI: Tennessee*, and a collection of his poetry was selected for the Idaho Poetry Prize by Dorianne Laux.

While much of Jeff's work happens behind the scenes, its effects are clear in every successful grant submitted and every trainee that is ultimately supported. The GPO—and the broader UVA community—benefit greatly from his expertise and long-standing commitment to excellence.