

ASNR Virtual Mentorship Program Stories: Charalambos “Bobby” C. Charalambous, PhD

My name is Charalambos “Bobby” C. Charalambous, and I am a Medical Instructor of Neurology at Duke University School of Medicine. I began my academic training in kinesiology and transitioned into neurorehabilitation during my work with Carolee Winstein, PT, PhD, maintaining this focus throughout my interdisciplinary academic and research career. I am a clinical motor neuroscientist whose work centers on locomotor control and learning and motor recovery after stroke, with a particular emphasis on the role of major descending motor pathways in post-stroke motor function and recovery.



Since moving into neurorehabilitation, I have been actively involved with the American Society of Neurorehabilitation (ASNR), first as a member (2014–present), attendee and presenter at the Annual Meeting, and participant in webinars, and more recently as a member of the Membership Engagement Committee (2021–present). One of the most meaningful aspects of my involvement with the society has been participating in ASNR’s Virtual Mentoring Program (VMP), which provides structured, year-long mentoring to support the academic development of trainees and early-career professionals in neurorehabilitation.

The VMP was launched in early 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a new way to connect mentors and mentees virtually. At that time, I was in Cyprus fulfilling a two-year home physical residency, but I remained engaged with ASNR through online activities and webinars, so when I received the email announcing the program, I applied immediately. The program’s goal, to offer tailored career mentoring in neurorehabilitation, aligned perfectly with my needs during my third postdoctoral fellowship, and I was fortunate to be accepted as a mentee.

I was paired with Jyutika Mehta, PhD, CCC-SLP, FHEA, FASNR, FASHA, a Professor at Texas Woman’s University and Director of the Mike A. Myers Stroke Center, and from our first Zoom meeting, it was clear that the match was ideal. Over the year, our conversations were organized around four themes (career planning, academic strategies, professional skills, and research and professional collaborations), and our meetings often extended beyond the scheduled hour. To make the most of our time, I would send a list of questions in advance, and Dr. Mehta’s honesty, transparency, and professionalism made her guidance especially impactful; as a result, she remains a trusted colleague to whom I still turn for advice and support.

About a year ago, when ASNR invited applications for new VMP mentors, I did not hesitate to apply because of the positive experience I had as a mentee. I now serve as a VMP mentor for a postdoctoral trainee, and the experience has been quite different but equally rewarding; as a mentor, the focus shifts toward being selfless, listening carefully, and helping the mentee align their short- and long-term goals with concrete, achievable steps. The mentoring relationship may appear unidirectional, but in reality, the learning is bidirectional: mentors gain new perspectives, refine their own leadership and communication skills, and stay closely connected to the next generation of neurorehabilitation researchers.

Being part of the Virtual Mentoring Program, as both mentee and mentor, has been one of the most meaningful components of my engagement with ASNR. For trainees and early-career investigators, it offers targeted support and a sense of community; for more senior faculty, it is a structured, impactful way to give back while continuing to grow professionally. To anyone considering applying, whether as a mentee or a mentor, I would strongly recommend getting involved with VMP. It is a unique opportunity to build lasting, supportive relationships that strengthen both individual careers and the broader neurorehabilitation community.