

Understanding Health Disparities and Promoting Health Equity Through Summer Internship Programs: A Focus on Lessons Learned, Knowledge Gained, and Next Steps

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Background

- Members of racial/ethnic minority groups are underrepresented throughout the pipeline for health sciences and research, from students to researchers and scientists.
- Similarly, addressing and eliminating health disparities and facilitating health equity remain critical—both through the inclusion of minority researchers and scientists, **AND** a focus on minority health and determinants of health.
- A formal internship program combining faculty and students from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds to address health-related issues can be key in addressing health disparities and fostering health equity.

Objective

- Align researchers and students at the graduate, college, and high school levels to promote careers in research and health care, with a focus on those from underrepresented groups.
- Foster an understanding of community health needs to minimize health disparities and facilitate health equity through research and outreach.

Methods

Cohort:

- Chicagoland high school and undergraduate students.

Core experiences:

- Develop a research project with a focus on health disparities and health equity.
- Participate in diverse learning experiences (e.g. lectures, community events, book clubs).
- Assist in data collection and analysis for current IRB- approved research.
- Engage with multidisciplinary faculty and staff for career trajectory planning.
- Participate in weekly reflections to discuss experiences and develop writing skills.

Key roles (one individual may take multiple roles):

- Faculty Members- Mentor students through the research process.
- Research Coordinators- Assist with participant recruitment and data collection.
- Community Liaisons-Identify events and organizations for student visitation.
- Program Coordinator- Oversee candidate selection, program advertising, and administrative duties (e.g. schedules and event coordination).

Sample Timeline for Research Project Development:

Timeline	Project Target
Week 1	Research question
Week 2	Literature review
Week 3	Methods
Week 4	IRB form and data analysis request
Week 5	Submit paper and presentation (up to methods section)
Week 6	Submit results and conclusion
Week 7	Submit final paper
Week 8	Submit and present poster and final paper

References:

- Allen-Ramdiel, S. A. A., & Campbell, A. G. (2014). Reimagining the pipeline: Advancing STEM diversity, persistence, and success. *BioScience*, 64(7), 612-618.
- Braveman, P. A., Kumanyika, S., Fielding, J., LaVeist, T., Borrell, L. N., Manderscheid, R., & Troutman, A. (2011). Health disparities and health equity: the issue is justice. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(S1), S149-S155.
- Rabionet, S. E., Santiago, L. E., & Zorrilla, C. D. (2009). A multifaceted mentoring model for minority researchers to address HIV health disparities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(S1), S65-S70.
- Lee, J., Schram, A., Riley, E., Harris, P., Baum, F., Fisher, M., ... & Friel, S. (2018). Addressing health equity through action on the social determinants of health: a global review of policy outcome evaluation methods. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, 7(7), 581.



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Sample Weekly Schedule:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
16					
9 ^{AM}	SEARCH Training 3034C				
10		Introduction to Research Methods: Statistics 827 AAC			COIP Site Visit 843 W Wilson
11	Summer Student Reflections 842C Conference Room	Genetics Friends Presentation 833 AAC	Book Club: College of Nursing 732 AAC	Introduction to Research Methods: HD Office Dr. Glover's Office	
12 ^{PM}	CPC Case Presentation 84C 984A		Introduction to Research Methods: Epidemiology 802 AAC	Introduction to Research Methods: Statistics Dr. Caperton's Office	
1		Introduction to Research Methods: Health Disparities 868 AAC		Introduction to Research Methods: HD Office Dr. Glover's Office	
2					
3			CEHHA Health Fair Planning 848 Room	SEARCH Consents 848 Room	Staff Check in CEHHA Summer Program Zoom
4					
5				2018 Summer Equity Series: Austin Coming Together 2018 201 S LaSalle Street, Suite #1340	
6					
7					

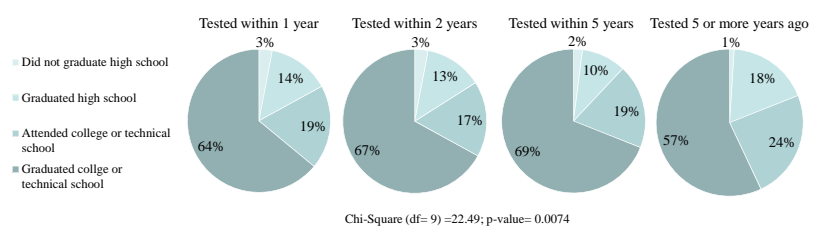
Results

- 186 applicants in 2018 vs. 29 applicants in 2014
- 30 high school and undergraduate students since 2013, largely during summer sessions.

Sample Topics

- Facilitators of successful educational attainment by African American adults from East and West Garfield Park.
- Association between mental health and income in U.S. adults age 65 years+.
- The impact of education level on cholesterol awareness among Asian Americans.

Figure 1: Sample Project Finding: Cholesterol Testing by Education Level for Asian Americans



Conclusions

- Interest in the program has continued to grow.
- Students continue to pursue their interests in health and research with students being accepted into graduate programs at Rush University, UIC, and other institutions.

Program Barriers:

- Stipend vs. paycheck- Students may need periodic compensation throughout programs instead of a lump sum after program completion.
- Transportation- Students continue to require resources, including public transportation access.
- Faculty Time- Faculty members may not have adequate time to provide consistent mentorship.

Plans for the Future:

- Recruiting interested and available diverse faculty across Rush University Medical Center.
- Incorporating textbook and related resources.
- Advertise and recruit for internship programs throughout the year via workshops and lectures provided by program-affiliated faculty and staff in local high schools and institutions.

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