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Effective supports for historically underrepresented undergraduate students pursuing biomedical research training

Chavez Martinez, Efrain; Lancaster, Jordan; Mikail, Rosol; Huerta, Javier; Raz Link, Aaron and Marriott, Lisa; OHSU-PSU School of Public Health

Keywords

Focus Groups; Public Health; Students; Biomedical Research; Training Support; Research Support as Topic

Abstract

Biomedical research training is essential for scientific innovation and advancements. Prior work established a federally-funded biomedical research training program (BUILD EXITO), which developed informal structures for supporting underrepresented undergraduates pursuing biomedical science. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of web-based engagement, offering multi-modal approaches for supporting students pursuing biomedical research training. Students in the BUILD EXITO biomedical research training program completed surveys with open-prompt questions that provided perspectives on effective training supports and needs as they pursued biomedical science. This study analyzed a subset of responses from three academic years (2020-2023) encompassing five student cohorts. Common themes and lessons learned from the analysis were subsequently shared with public health graduate students by a focus group, who reflected with each other about EXITO Enrichment program components that could be successfully transferred or adapted to enhance support of graduate students in the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health. This project contributes to the advancement of effective pedagogical and training supports for historically underrepresented undergraduate students, which is essential for enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the biomedical research community. Considerations for academic programs to monitor and evaluate their support strategies regarding students' academic performance, program satisfaction, and retention are discussed. Together, this project aims to amplify strategies, opportunities, and resources that support the full participation and engagement of underrepresented students in biomedical science.

Research Question

What biomedical research training supports for underrepresented undergraduates are most transferrable to graduate students pursuing public health?

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this poster session, the learner will:

1. Identify supports for engaging underrepresented undergraduates in biomedical science
2. Understand approaches for engaging their student populations in programmatic feedback
3. Consider strategies that can be incorporated into their programmatic area or field of study