

## **Abstract: Fostering the Development of Health Professions Education Scholars through Collaborative Learning & Practice**

**Authors:** Authors: Mariah Rudd, BS, Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd, Sarah Parker, PhD

**Background:** Continued advancement of high-quality health professions education research is dependent upon the development of educators who can design research with the same rigor demanded in basic science or clinical research. To support this need at our institution, our teaching academy used a social constructivist approach to develop an interdisciplinary program comprised of a health professions education research curriculum in conjunction with an internal resource supported and mentor-guided, peer-review quality education research element as the final project .

**Methods:** The authors developed the Health professions Education Scholars (HERS) program, a 1-year intensive, mentorship-guided program designed to facilitate participants through individual health professions education research project. A competitive selection process was established, with online applications being reviewed by program Course Directors, to identify program participants. The course directors invited a small group of experts to serve as mentors and several critical internal resources to provide ongoing, local guidance and support throughout the duration of the program. The program curriculum included foundational courses from the AAMC Medical Education Research Certification (MERC) program, a nationally recognized professional development program. In parallel to formal didactic instruction and hands-on training, participants were actively mentored through the design and execution of a health professions education research project of peer-reviewed publication quality.

**Results:** The course directors (in cooperation with Department Chairs) selected eight accomplished and motivated clinicians who were interested in pursuing a health professions educator track to participate in the first year of this program. Participants represented a diverse group of health professions educators from across the health system. Participants were each matched with an experienced mentor and were required to protect one designated day per month to devote to participation in the program. At the end of the first cycle, all participants received their MERC certification. Additionally, all participants have presented their projects at the regional, national, and international level (9 local poster presentations, 1 local podium presentation, 4 national post presentation, 1 international poster presentation). Four manuscript drafts are in development with 1 completed manuscript under review. The second cycle of the program began with 8 participants in Fall 2019. The program was revised to a 18-month curriculum, adapted due to feedback from our first cycle. At the end of the first cycle, participants have completed seven abstracts, given 7 local poster presentation, 1 local oral presentation, presented ear-long program, participants will have completed a mentor-guided project of peer-review quality and will be certified through the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Medical Education Research Certificate (MERC) Program. A pre-assessment questionnaire was given to participants at the beginning of our second cycle to help us gauge impact and self-assessed improvement from the program.

**Discussion:** The primary goals of the HERS program were to provide participants with instruction in health professions education research principles and practical skills to do so effectively, foster collaboration within health professions education research, and develop our participants as leaders in academic medicine. The authors hope that the inaugural year of this intensive, mentorship guided program will improve the execution of health professions education at their institution, build a coalition

of skilled medical education researchers, and ultimately contribute to national and international academic research on health professions education.