

## **Abstract 9**

**Title of Abstract:** Launching into healthcare: A social justice framework for college-and-career readiness

### ***Problem/Needs Assessment:***

Wake Forest School of Medicine (WFSOM) and Wake Forest University (WFU) partnered to engage high school students about healthcare careers and pathways to higher education. This unique partnership resulted from shared goals of diversity and inclusion, social justice and community outreach. This collaboration is rooted in Paulo Freire's problem-based pedagogical framework, intended to expose students to careers in healthcare, while simulating the harsh realities of health disparities in the community.

### ***Program Objectives:***

In 2017, the Student Inclusion and Diversity Committee of WFSOM identified three strategic goals: *develop* pipeline programming; *recruit* students from diverse backgrounds; and *create* programs aimed at student retention.

### ***Description of Program:***

WFU introduced the College Launch for Leadership (CLL) program, designed to prepare high school juniors to be college-ready, social justice advocates. Monthly CLL sessions introduce students to various careers, develop professional, and link these emerging mindsets to concepts in social justice. CLL culminates with a youth participatory action project for students to *identify* a community need, *design* a research study, and *implement* social action.

Upon recognizing shared goals, the WFSOM and CLL created a session exploring healthcare careers with an emphasis on health inequities. Students interact with healthcare providers, i.e., MDs, PAs, CRNAs, etc. Students complete a case study, addressing a patient's physiological needs and social determinants of health, including insurance status, mental health, and access to community resources.

### ***Evaluation/Assessment:***

This project was evaluated using a mixed-methods approach with quantitative data for racial/ethnic diversity and qualitative data from student post-survey feedback and reflective papers. Of the 92 CLL

participants, 62 (66%) attended the healthcare session. Most of the attendees were self-identified as African American (69.1%), Hispanic/Latino (19.1%), and Asian (5.3%). The program will be repeated in April 2019, and longitudinal metrics, including college enrollment and undergraduate major, will be tracked using the National Student Clearinghouse.

***Conclusions and Lessons Learned:***

The unique intrainstitutional partnership between WFSOM and WFU provides a social justice framework for high school students to explore healthcare careers and identify healthcare inequities in their community. A key aspect of this partnership includes the involvement of the medical center to ensure alignment with long-term healthcare workforce needs.