Hub: Boston University
Grant: TL1
Category: Other – URP
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Issue Being Addressed: Recruitment of Under-represented Persons: Since the TL1 Program launched, the Directors have been implementing multiple strategies to increase recruitment of under-represented persons such as, but not limited to, collaborating with Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, outreach to other training program directors using program brochures and advertising in minorityscholar.org. We continued to build upon these strategies as outlined below:

In 2020, the Directors adjusted the focus of their recruitment strategies to include more "high-touch" communication and engagement activities with potential applicants through national professional organizations to which students belong, the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRACMS) and the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). The Directors identified and engaged with a faculty member in the medical school's Division of Graduate Medical Sciences who is active in both of these organizations and experienced with preparing students to enter and succeed in biomedical research careers and passionate about experimenting with strategies to enhance diversity and equity in science education.

We developed two new **high-touch strategies** that brought us in closer engagement with STEM students from under-represented backgrounds. The **first** new strategy we implemented was having the faculty member in Graduate Medical Sciences, serve as a "program advocate" to attend the meetings and promote the program through various sessions to inspire interest in Regenerative Medicine research training opportunities, listen to what they are seeking in research training, and activate contact with potential applicants. Interested students are then connected via email with the TL1 Directors who follow-up with them to further explore their career interests, the specifics of the program, current research being done by trainees, and discuss recruitment opportunities and openings. Because of the COVID Pandemic, the annual conferences are virtual. Although not face-to-face, we found that virtual participation was well-attended and broadened the capacity to engage with students and promote biomedical careers through our program.

The **second** strategy is to use social media to connect with students already engaged in ABRACMS and SACNAS.

And finally, a **third** strategy for the upcoming year in 2022 is to work on creating partnerships with scientific societies, including ABRCMS and SACNAS, to enable us to provide webinars at these annual conferences. The intent is to create a TL1 Program presence so that the TL1 Directors can show exciting research being done in Regenerative Medicine and what is like to be a trainee in the TL1 Program.
We are tracking the number of potential applicants with whom we engage, as well as attract to the TL1 program using the three new strategies to compare to previous years. We find that in this early stage of implementation that applicant interest has markedly increased compared to previous years. Pilot testing recruitment strategies to include more "high-touch" communication and engagement activities with potential applicants through national professional organizations to which they belong is promising. We continue to implement these strategies in the upcoming year to assess its benefits and outcomes.