The University of Rochester Center for Leading Innovation and Collaboration (CLIC) is the coordinating center for the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program, funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Grant U24TR002260.

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**Contact Info:** Rechelle Paranal (Evaluation) – paranal@musc.edu and Diana Lee-Chavarria (KL2) – leearch@musc.edu

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The SC Clinical & Translational Research Institute (SCTR) TL1 and KL2 applicant pool for URP trainees benefits greatly from MUSC's strong recruitment approaches. The University and College initiatives are designed to increase the total number of URP faculty members and the KL2 initiatives are designed to identify potential URP candidates for the KL2 program and assist them in applying to the program. By leveraging the SCTR Coordinated Management Model, which strategically aligns CTSA programmatic initiatives with an MUSC enterprise-wide Collaborative Management Model, we have been able to take advantage of MUSC's recruitment efforts and emphasis on diversity and inclusion at all trainee and scholar levels. MUSC's College of Medicine has made significant gains in recruiting and retaining a group of diverse trainees, since 2016 ranking at the 96th percentile of medical schools with the most African American graduates. In addition, we recruit from the other MUSC colleges, which have high

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**Careers I2I 2022: In Our Own Words**  
**SC Clinical & Translational Research Institute (SCTR)**  
**Medical University of South Carolina**

SCTR has leveraged key diversity initiatives to impact and expand Workforce Development and Training recruitment:

- The KL2 program is able to take advantage of MUSC recruitment efforts by leveraging an enterprise-wide Collaborative Management Model and existing relationships with all colleges.
- The strategic creation of the MUSC Office of Equity aligns diversity, equity, & inclusion efforts between MUSC University and MUSC Health.
- Broader workforce development initiatives target diverse populations from high school/undergraduate students, URP, women, and early career investigators at local, regional, and statewide levels.
- Leverage institutional financial supports and departmental resources to assist in protecting time for clinical scientists.
- Diverse mentorship initiatives help support and train mentors and mentees, including an annual Mentorship Training Symposium, K to R Club, quarterly progress meetings, and the Clinical Trialist Training Program.
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In 2014, MUSC established a Diversity & Inclusion Office whose Chief Diversity Officer was a member of SCTR’s Internal Advisory Board. A university-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan was developed and interprofessional working groups were charged with developing strategies for addressing five areas for improvement: Recruitment and Pipeline Development; Education and Training; Engagement and Inclusion; Communication, Community Relations and Outreach; Performance Outcomes and Metrics. In 2016 the Department of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) was created, which enhanced outreach and increased efforts to promote diversity, and by 2020 the Office of Equity united MUSC University and MUSC Health to align efforts to further elevate, empower and prioritize innovative infrastructure, programs, and resources across the enterprise. The DEI strategic plan lays out a number of objectives and priorities for MUSC, including education and training.

The SCTR KL2, TL1, and Training & Workforce Development (SCTR TWD) programs at large also benefit from local, regional, and state wide targeted initiatives that aim to expand the biomedical and clinical & translational workforce. Locally MUSC supports the implementation of a summer undergraduate research program (SURP) and the E.E. Just Symposium, which celebrates the scientific accomplishments of a prominent African American marine biologist and native son, Ernest E. Just, PhD. Several prestigious and highly competitive minority-training grants have also demonstrated an increase in the URP trainee applicant pool and its retention. These funded initiatives have helped strengthen and diversify the biomedical disciplinarity of the local workforce. The NHLBI grant supports short-term/summer research training in the cardiovascular sciences for minority students, the NIGMS Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP), which prepares minorities for biomedical research careers, has resulted in more URP applicants to MUSC’s College of Graduate Studies PhD Program, and the NIGMS Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD), which supports doctoral training for minorities, has made an impact.

The J.R. Raymond Fellowship provides MUSC faculty a stipend mentor-collaboration award and the Advancement, Recruitment, and Retention of Women in Science (ARROWS) helped bolster MUSC Institutional efforts as the first ever grant from the National Science Foundation’s ADVANCE program. Additionally, MUSC was the recipient of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation’s Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists grant, which aimed to help sustain research productivity of physician scientists who were also representation of female and URP students (the College of Health Professions, the College of Pharmacy, the College of Graduate Studies, the College of Dental Medicine, and the College of Nursing).
caregivers. In the 5 years administering the award, two thirds of MUSC’s recipients were women and two thirds were K scholars. MUSC also has a strong research relationship with the Ralph H. Johnson Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital, which offers Veterans Health Administration Equity-Related Funding Opportunities and a VA Training in Health Services Research Fellowship Program.

Regionally, the SC Cancer Disparities Research Center (SC CADRE) is a U54 funded partnership between MUSC and SC State University with research, education, and outreach goals for URP students & investigators. Statewide, MUSC is an active partner with the Carolina Center on Alzheimer’s Disease and Minority Research (CCADMR), which is comprised of the 2 other large research universities in the state and 3 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). The aim is to provide multi-institutional mentorship and expertise to early career investigators with the aim to increase the diversity of the research workforce focused on population health. In addition, MUSC has a history of being ranked by Forbes magazine as one of America's Best Employers for Diversity (6 among the 20 education institutions.) MUSC Diversity [https://web.musc.edu/about/leadership/institutional-offices/diversity](https://web.musc.edu/about/leadership/institutional-offices/diversity)

The KL2 Advisory Committee is comprised of key members of MUSC’s scientific community, representing diverse expertise from across all colleges on campus. This group provides direction and advice to KL2 program direction, and members also serve as program “ambassadors” to their respective colleges and faculty to aid in recruitment and scholar development. KL2 Leadership and the KL2 Facilitation Group continue to meet with the Scholars (both our SCTR NIH-funded KL2s and the awardees from our complementary institutionally-funded program) and their mentoring teams on a quarterly basis to ensure the scholars are on track to independence.

Strategies: Building on these successes, several new initiatives have been implemented. The goal of these initiatives is to prepare and support KL2 scholars to engage and remain in careers in clinical and translational research. Therefore, our efforts have three strategies: 1) Recruit a diverse pool of applicants; 2) Provide scholars with the training and networking opportunities that enhance their educational growth; 3) Retain and Mentor scholars within the programs. The SCTR KL2 program uses several approaches to increase the number of competitive KL2 applications from URPs. These include: (1) Targeted announcement of available slots in the program to the listserv of African American minority scientists at MUSC and a listserv for the local chapter of SACNAS (Soc. for Adv. of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science) that was founded by Dr. Cristina Lopez, Co-Director of SCTR Integrating Special Populations Program and a BIRCWH K12 graduate; (2) The KL2 directors hold a meeting with these groups after each RFA is issued to answer questions about the program and encourage applications; (3) Successful URP researchers at MUSC and URP graduates of institutional K programs serve as ambassadors for the program to help publicize the program and identify potential candidates; (4) Offering pre-submission coaching to URP applicants.
KL2 Recruitment: The SCTR KL2/K12 scholar applicant pool for URP faculty benefits greatly from MUSC’s strong recruitment approaches with the institution being named as part of Forbes 2018 Best Employers for Diversity, and recognized as a 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award recipient and a 2020 Diversity Champion. This is the fourth consecutive year that MUSC earned a place among the HEED honorees and the third consecutive year that MUSC was named a Diversity Champion by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity publication and website in higher education. MUSC has made significant gains in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and trainee corps. The Dean of the College of Medicine is providing salary support to departments in the College to help recruit faculty from underrepresented minorities. Additionally, the College of Medicine has earned national recognition as one of the top ten medical colleges in the nation for the enrollment and graduation of Black males.

The KL2 scholar program has a very high representation of women scholars (85% CTSA Common Metric). When we analyze the data using the new operational guidelines, which include “female” as part of the URP calculation, our data shows 91% of SCTR KL2 female graduates currently hold senior faculty positions as full or associate professors. Furthermore, the program will continue to align with the goals of the MUSC ARROWS program in order to contribute to increasing the number of URP & women scientists, with a focus on changing the applicant pool/hiring practices and changing promotion policies along with providing key supports. Additionally, synergies with other K programs, such as the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) K12 grant, strengthen the training environment established to help support women scholars.

KL2 Training:

- The KL2 Program hosts Scholar-dedicated Mock Study Sections for those preparing for extramural application submissions.
- Program staff also prepared the Scholars for calls with NIH Institute/Center Program Officers to discuss their initial Specific Aims and Hypotheses.
- Scholars participate in the K Grant Writing and (Re)Writing Science courses with peers from other campus K12 programs to develop and refine their scientific writing skills
- Other required program activities undertaken include K to R Club, SOCRATES, CCRT, and appropriate IRB and Regulatory consults.
KL2 Mentoring and Retaining: The primary objective of the SCTR KL2 program is to deliver high-quality mentoring and training to support the progression of KL2 scholars to independent translational science research careers. The program is structured so that KL2 scholars receive in-depth guidance by their mentoring team through the early development of IDPs and KL2 directors meet with scholars and their mentors on a quarterly basis to assess the progress of their research and the effectiveness of the mentee-mentor partnerships. Additional targeted resources are offered to scholars and mentors such as the Tools for Mentors and Mentees series, the mentor training program, the annual SCTR mentoring symposium and KL2 career development activities (grant writing course, K to R, (Re)Writing Science, Mock study sections, planned peer mentoring program).