The purpose of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) Deep South Pre-doctoral Clinical/Translational Research (TL1) Program is to prepare the future workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to accelerate the translation of discovery research to health application. Fostering skilled, system thinkers that can make connections across fields as part of transdisciplinary teams requires that scholars understand translational, multi-lingual conversations. Our TL1 program immerses scholars in an ecosystem of such communications, thereby promoting the development of holistic, system-level understanding as a product of the program's environment.

Our program builds this environment by starting with the trainees enrolled. We purposely select trainees that span disciplines, race, ethnicity, gender and institution. Next, the program employs individual development plans (IDPs) to strategically select required and encouraged activities that will foster the development of our trainees. For instance, research skills are honed through formal coursework (e.g. MSPH for medical students), translational training and certificate programs, the CCTS Training Symposium(s), annual ACTS conferences, research project(s) and mentorship. Translational thinking is fostered through didactic and team building sessions such as Orientation, Design Thinking Workshops and Friday Fellow meetings. Exposure to health disparities and equity research and cultural competencies for working with participants is accomplished by participation in a Bioethics Forum and
Community Engagement Institute activities. Finally, the CCTS works with trainees both individually and collectively so that consistent interaction (via IDP defined activities and beyond) occurs among trainees over the course of their one-year appointment, contributing to the creation of a diverse community of scholarship at the CCTS that creates the need to understand translational, multi-lingual communications.

Measures used to determine success include tracking the demographic information of our program’s applicants and recipients (as a measure of the engagement and appointment of trainees from diverse backgrounds), progress made on IDPs (as a measure of programmatic engagement), instances of overlapping programmatic assignment (as a measure of environment), qualitative post-appointment assessments (as a measure of adoption) and career-tracking (as a measure of continued research engagement). Along with quantitative metrics, post-appointment assessments help identify strengths and weaknesses of the TL1 program.

Since its inception in 2009, the CCTS has supported 93 TL1 trainees (past or active appointments) representing six institutions (Auburn, UAB, Tulane, LSU, Rutgers and HAIB) and multiple academic units (schools, departments). All trainees (except for current appointees) completed the TL1 program requirements. Since 2012, the CCTS has supported 86 TL1 trainees (past and active), of which, 47 have not yet completed their formal training (i.e. are still in residency, fellowship or degree-seeking) and 15 are actively appointed to the TL1 program. Also since 2012, 100% of those that have completed their formal training (nine individuals) are still actively engaged in research, including one CLIC-defined URP. Considering that 22% of the 86-person cohort qualify as CLIC-defined underrepresented persons (URPs), future Common Metrics reporting from our Hub will undoubtedly show an increase in URPs having completed their formal training.

Measuring if an environment or program increases the understanding of translational multi-lingual communications is a challenge in terms of metrics, attributes and controls. Therefore, we will continue our work on identifying and executing informative evaluation metrics to support our translational research training model.