Council of Graduate Schools
ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission to Completion

PASSAGE Scholars Program
PROMOTING SUCCESS IN STEM GRADUATE EDUCATION
PaSSaGE Scholars Program

• The New Dean’s Vision

• The proposal writing process

• The PASSAGE Scholars Program

• Observations
The New Dean’s Vision for the Graduate College

To move the GC from an administrative/compliance college to one that serves students’ needs with respect to:

• Professional development and career preparation
• Stipend funding to promote timely degree completion
• Graduate program relevance to contemporary careers and overall program quality
• Reorganize diversity efforts to emphasize undergraduate research experience and graduate mentoring initiatives
The Proposal Writing Process
1st Meeting

We started late and had one month to submit!

- First meeting: Dean and two diversity group members

- Decisions made: Focus on STEM graduate students and improving the undergraduate to faculty pipeline.

- First draft: Completed in 10 days
The Proposal Writing Process

Important Steps

1. Carefully define your target group.
   *Incoming URM STEM PhD students*

2. Evaluate gaps in services.
   *URM undergraduate to faculty pipeline*

3. Determine which service gap matches the award.
   *What can you do with $30,000?*

4. The proposal must respond to the award’s focus.
   *“From Admission to Completion”*

5. Think outside the box and seek input from outside the group.
The Proposal Writing Process
1st Draft

• First draft was good, but too broad, incorporated our new initiatives and wasn’t clear how money would be used, or how it encompassed the “from admission to completion” theme

• Second meeting brought in additional people from within and outside of the diversity group to brain-storm

• Rewrote quickly.
The Proposal Writing Process

2nd Draft

1. Carefully define your target group.

   *Incoming URM STEM PhD students*

2. Evaluate gaps in services.

   *URM undergraduate to faculty pipeline....specifically, a summer doctoral transition program to give URM STEM PhD students a head start on their research.*

3. Determine which service gap matches the award.

   *What can you do with $30,000? Fund housing and stipends for six students in the summer before they start graduate school.*
4. The proposal must respond to the award’s focus - “From Admission to Completion”

$500 - Added incentives for completion of preliminary/ qualifying exam to go to discipline specific meeting or course

$500 – Added for completion of degree to travel to job interviews.

5. Seek advice from outside the group.

Our special projects coordinator, a History graduate student, could see through the details and identified our focus!
The PASSAGE Scholars Program

Target Group

• A summer doctoral transition experience for 6 incoming URM STEM PhD students.

Experience

• A summer research rotation or independent study supervised by a faculty mentor in their new department
• A series of weekly workshops led by faculty and PhD candidates
• Assigned senior graduate students as peer-mentors
The PASSAGE Scholars Program

Logistics

• Students live as a group in two bedroom suites in one of the new on-campus apartment dorms. We arrange and pay for housing.
• Students are admitted early and register for a “research rotation” or graduate research course in their respective departments/programs.
• We waive tuition and pay fees associated with summer semester. Students receive an $4000 stipend for the summer +$300 for dining on campus.

Selection

• Competitive application, students selected by faculty advisory committee who also determined final program structure and who facilitate weekly workshops
UIC PASSAGE Scholars 2014

Loru Delgado Rivera  
UPR – Río Piedras  
Medicinal Chemistry

Amanda Henderson  
DePaul University  
Biological Sciences

Kayleigh Tovar  
UIC  
Microbiology

Lola Adeyemo  
U. of Miami  
Physiology & Biophysics

Nathan Lopez  
UCSB  
Mathematics

Laura Segura  
Agnes Scott College  
Neuroscience
UIC PASSAGE Scholars Program 2013

Braulio Rodriguez
Fairfield State University
Biological Sciences
LAS

Vanessa Nepomuceno
U of South Carolina
Pharmacognosy
COP

Chris Perez
CalTech
Mathematics
LAS

Kevin Vissuet
UCSD
Mathematics
LAS

Magdalena Gonzalez-Vega
U of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez
Department of Physiology and Biophysics
COM

Ben Richardson
U of Chicago
Medical Chemistry
COP
PASSAGE Scholars Calendar Summer 2014

Week One
June 16th  Program begins, students move in
June 17th  Orientation, department and lab visits
June 18th  Campus tour, get IDs
June 19th  To Lab/Department!
June 20th  Behind the scenes guided tour of Field Museum

Students doing research full time except for 4 workshops:
June 27th  Workshop 1: What to Expect in Grad School
July 11th  Workshop 2: Reading and Analyzing a Research Paper
July 25th  Workshop 3: Writing a Research Paper/Abstract
August 8th Workshop 4: Giving a Research Talk

Final Program Report Due on August 8th (last day) - Presentation
Students can remain in housing until August 15th
Semester starts August 25th
PASSAGE Scholars Orientation and Workshop #1

Scholars Meet

• Research Mentors
• Grad College Staff
• Faculty Advisory Group
• Senior Grad Students
Scholars and their Peer Mentors at the Field Museum

Scholars w/ Lunaire and Aixa

Magdalis and Geovannie

Cristian and Ben

Tristesse and Vanessa
Observations

Students

• Reaching academic milestones – early!
• Developing Relationships - roommates and social activities

Program

• Added incentive to our recruitment efforts
• Connecting students to other funding and programs
Thank you!

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Office of Recruitment and Diversity
Graduate College
University of Illinois at Chicago
lford@uic.edu