2018 CTC Summer Student Immersion Program

The Comprehensive Transplant Center (CTC) offers a Summer Student Immersion Program with an emphasis on health services and outcomes research as well as opportunities related to basic science research within a structured environment to learn and enjoy research. The program originated with Northwestern University Transplant Outcomes Research Collaborative (NUTORC) 9 years ago and has expanded to include basic science research under the broader CTC umbrella as the CTC Summer Student Immersion Program (CTCSSIP). The CTCSSIP objectives are to teach students how to conduct research and provide them with a comprehensive experience of transplant surgery through faculty lectures and clinical obse rvations in the operating room and outpatient transplant clinic. The students’ experience can stimulate a long lasting interest in research early in their career that can be carried in any area of medicine.

Over the last 9 years, the CTCSSIP program has demonstrated success and productivity with over 160 students mentored from across the United States. The program targets high school, college, and medical school students. In 2018, 22 students were selected to participate in the program from over 150 applications. Students either identified their own mentor within the CTC or were interviewed and assisted in identifying a mentor that best fit their interests. During the first few weeks, students were given the necessary skills to conduct research such as effective use of PubMed, Endnote and basic statistics. Students are also provided with the opportunity to shadow transplant clinicians in clinic, in the operating room and observe multidisciplinary morning rounds as part of the summer program. In addition to the weekly NUTORC lab meeting and resident lectures, the course included over 20 additional faculty lectures covering basics in transplantation, health services outcomes topics, as well as bioengineering and immunology. The summer program culminates in the poster session which provides students the opportunity to present their findings and what they learned to CTC members and NM colleagues. Some students also have the opportunity to participate in ongoing research beyond the summer program depending on their interest and their mentor’s needs.

The CTC is on a mission to foster and attract future physician-scientists and scholars to the field of transplant medicine and the CTCSSIP program provides students the rare opportunity to delve into transplant-related research at an early stage of their medical career development.

Feedback from students regarding the program has been exceptionally positive. Students commented:

- “My favorite aspects were how willing the doctors were to mentor us, the lectures and how they encompassed so many different aspects of transplant, the clinical observations, and the research itself.”
- “I really enjoyed doing the research for my project, and the presentation day was my favorite day of the program. Coming into the program, I had little to zero knowledge about transplantation or about medicine in general. It was an outstanding introduction and was amazing to be able to present this research to other doctors.”
- “I enjoyed the lectures and how well the leaders were able to communicate their ideas and personal areas of research.”

Much of the program’s popularity and interest has been generated through recommendations from former students.

For additional information about the summer student immersion program, please visit our website: www.nutorc.org or follow us on twitter @NUTORC