



*University of Utah*

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

**A Mentorship Model for Educationally Disadvantaged High School Students Interested in the Nursing Profession**

**Author: Keely VandenBerge**

**Faculty Mentor: Sara Hart, College of Nursing**

**Abstract**

A lack of diversity in the health care workforce can negatively impact patient care. Evidence demonstrates that when workforce diversity does not reflect the population receiving care, patient outcomes are negatively affected (Sullivan Commission, 2004). One of the many approaches to addressing this complex issue is the use of mentorship programs. These programs encourage underrepresented high school aged students to consider careers in nursing and other health professions. This project designs and implements a mentorship program for high school students enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant Program at Granite Technical Institute and nursing students at the University of Utah. A mentorship program strengthens pathways for diverse nursing students to enter the nursing program. An online mentorship hub facilitates guided interaction between nursing students and pre-program students at various stages in their education. Mentorship activities include Hub-based discussions relating to education resources and pathways to nursing education experiences, classroom teaching, and simulation center learning. The PDSA cycle is used to plan, implement, evaluate, and improve the program. Outcomes for the pilot semester include GTI students reporting high interest in health care fields, and identifying a need for additional information about applying for nursing programs. All participating high school students agreed or strongly agreed that learning from nursing students is beneficial. Nursing students reported satisfaction with the mentorship role and enjoyment of teaching high school students. Identified improvements for the next cycle include clearer communication of role expectations for nursing students and incorporation of teaching methods that promote critical thinking in the simulation lab with GTI students. Creating a mentorship program connecting underrepresented high school students with early college students has the potential to create beneficial relationships between mentors and mentees. These relationships can promote skills for academic success and while increasing interest and engagement in the nursing profession.

**References**

Sullivan Commission. (2004). Missing persons: Minorities in the health professions. A report of the Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce. Retrieved from [https://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf\\_files/SullivanReport.pdf](https://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/SullivanReport.pdf)