

Native Students LEAD the Way in Addressing Health Equity

By: Agnes Attakai

The Leadership in Health Equity for American Indian Researcher Development Program (LEAD) is a one-year structured program designed to help first year American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students address the challenges they face while pursuing a degree in Health Science and STEM (HSTEM) disciplines. Many AI/AN students drop out their first year at the University. Our goal is to provide AI/AN first year and junior college transfers the best foundation for matriculation to their second competitive year with their peers and ultimately, a successful academic career in HSTEM.



LEAD students who participated in the program

LEAD provides educational development activities for individual students but also addresses systemic barriers.

LEAD offers:

1. Equal platform to perform academically with information, skills, training and education.
2. Environment that honors AI/AN faculty as role models.
3. Experience that examines the consequences of health inequity.
4. Education and experiences that build confidence to become researchers and scientists.

The program addressed barriers to academic success by providing support of the whole being including cultural, emotional, and academic support. Students participate in college life management, individual development plans, knowledge assessments, a one semester success course and a leadership/internship course. In addition, they participate in academic and near-peer mentoring while applying critical thinking skills. Cultural events have included viewing Indigenous films, blanket ceremonies, and talking circles. They also participate in leadership, community service and financial assistance activities. At the end of the Spring semester, faculty and staff support student engagement in a capstone project and applying to summer research programs.

Seventeen students have participated in the program since inaugural year in 2019. Due to COVID-19, the program is offered in a virtual format.



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Indian Researcher Development Program

LEAD

For more information visit:

<https://nartc.fcm.arizona.edu/lead>

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