

A LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL & ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES OF AN EDUCATION SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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BACKGROUND

The Education Scholars Program (ESP) is a leadership development program, for health professional educators. It aims to facilitate the success of participants in their roles as leaders, educators, and faculty developers. In this research, a longitudinal evaluation was conducted to assess the short- and long-term outcomes of program participation.

METHOD

A multi-phase qualitative approach was employed. In phase one, ESP graduating cohorts participated in separate focus groups (N= 31) to discuss their experiences, and development through the program. Phase two involved semi-structured interviews with a sample of scholars (N=12) two to four years after program completion. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Comparative analyses were conducted to explore common themes and areas of divergence across data sets.

RESULTS

IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

Over the short- and long-term, participants reported experiencing positive, personal professional development in several areas:

Academic identity

I think it's really reinforced and strengthened my identity as an educator and even as a leader, and I think that's been a huge asset."

Social Network & Community Building

"Just learning from some of the big players in the University. knowing their names, interacting with them, bouncing ideas off of them, has been invaluable."

Confidence & Self-Efficacy

"I've always felt that I've been faking it up to now. And now I can learn the terms and names and theories behind what I was doing and almost feel that I'm a little bit more on equal footing with my colleagues who were doing education also."

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS AND CHANGE

A secondary outcome of the longitudinal follow up study was an examination of barriers that scholars have encountered in their work environments that constrained their ability to make positive developments to educational practices. They include:

- Senior Leadership Support
- Inability to Engage Others
- Financial Resources
- Time Constraints

INFLUENCE WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

Over the long-term follow up, graduates shared that ESP had helped enable them to exert influence within their organizations in several areas:

Student Advocacy

"I tend to speak up more when I do have ideas. I'm even more student-centred than I used to be. I'm not scared to advocate for them."

Faculty Development

"I have started a journal club for the in-patient faculty and residents which meets once a month. Along with one of the other faculty, we together ran this education interest group for faculty where we get together and talk about educational issues."

Standards of Teaching

"So we also have been involved in trying to improve the standard of the lectures basically over speaker development and trying to incorporate [certain] systems have them used more widely, try to motivate speakers to use the right format for their topics."

Formal Recognition and Valuing of Education

"I'm on a teaching evaluation committee . . . and I influence things in metrics to be captured for promotion and things such as having good evidence of teaching effectiveness and making efforts to accumulate extra credits or diplomas in education."

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study point to the myriad positive individual and organizational outcomes of leadership development programs such as ESP. In addition, they shed light on the implementation barriers that graduates encounter once they leave the program.