Bringing The STEM Cohort® to your campus

A pioneering and proven program to drive success in STEM for PEER students!

Cohort Design

Dr. Stoddard established the STEM Cohort Mentoring Program, "The STEM Cohort®," in 2017 to bolster the STEM success of persons historically excluded because of ethnicity or race (PEER). This affinity-based mentoring program centers Black and African American cultural values driving PEER student success. Students from any background can join.

The STEM Cohort® (TSC) endeavors to continue fostering the success of PEER students in STEM through intentional mentoring and asset affirmation support, expanding under the guidance of the L & Leola Educational Advancement Foundation non-profit.

Benefits of Bringing The STEM Cohort to Your Institution

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1. Increase STEM PEER aspiring student retention and resilience.
2. Increase STEM identity and sense of belonging for PEER students.
3. Increase STEM aspiring PEER students' connection to your institution.

*"The STEM Cohort gave me a **sense of purpose and belonging at Rhodes** that I didn't feel when I arrived. **It was my driving force to stay** at Rhodes and I was successful. [The STEM Cohort] **Helped me find a community of people** who I truly enjoy and who are like minded."*

- From the first four cohorts, participants have matriculated into many post-graduate programs:
  - A total of 59 students accepted into multiple graduate and/or professional programs with 112 **total program acceptances: 61 doctoral programs, 50 professional health programs, 45 masters programs, 8 post-baccalaureate programs**).
  - Students have been accepted into PhD and master's degree programs in the following fields: of Neuroscience, Chemistry; Chemistry and Biochemistry, Biomedical Engineering, Food Sciences; Cell and Molecular Biology, Biomedical Sciences Conservation Biology; Mechanical Engineering, Public Health and Epidemiology, Anthropology; Data Sciences, Statistics and Data Sciences.
  - Students have been accepted to health professions programs in Pharmacy, physical therapy, medicine, nursing, physician assistant, chiropractic medicine, public health, and speech pathology.
- Two STEM Cohort students have been awarded the NSF GRFP grant.

The STEM Cohort®: Selected Highlights

The STEM Cohort® (TSC) has had tremendous impacts on the professional and personal lives of our mentees. Institutionally, TSC students perform at higher levels than their peers creating significant impacts for institutions. Results below are for the Rhodes College site.

Table 1: Retention and Graduation Rate Comparison			
Rhodes 4-year retention rate	90%	Rhodes Black African American Retention rate	78%
TSC 4-year Retention Rate	98%	TSC Black African American Retention Rate	98%
Rhodes 1st year retention rate	91%	Rhodes Graduation Rate	83%
TSC 1st year Retention Rate	99%	TSC Graduation rate	96%

Mentor education and training

Mentor training is critical for the success of the program. In partnership with our Foundation, you will identify TSC mentor teams from your institution. Mentor teams will participate in training through The Mentoring Excellence Institute prior to the start of the program. Additionally, mentors will have regular 6-month and 12-month program meetings with the Foundation will be held to support their needs. Mentors should also be willing to pursue professional development outside the TSC program.

> **Mentors:** Mentors, effective mentoring, and advocacy are the driving forces behind the success of The STEM Cohort®.

Program Costs & Commitments

For The STEM Cohort® to be effective, support must be provided to the students, faculty, and staff members doing the work. The following annual costs are needed to support the program. We encourage fundraising efforts to expand support for the program site.

- A minimum operational budget of $2,500 for Foundation materials plus $250/student.
- Required faculty support: research support for the lead faculty mentor, stipends for mentors and co-mentors, and administrative support for the program.
- Commitment to support professional development for all faculty mentors in leadership, mentoring, and DEI training.
- Support all mentor team members in attending the American Association of Colleges and Universities conference Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM.

Becoming a site for The STEM Cohort®

We are excited about your interest and look forward to working with you. The STEM Cohort® program is a proven mentoring model that benefits students, mentors, and institutions interested in broadening participation in STEM and the entire STEM workforce!

Starting The STEM Cohort® at your institution requires a commitment agreement between the Foundation and you. We also want to ensure your success; thus, The L & Leola Educational Advancement Foundation non-profit will provide generous support to launch The STEM Cohort® at your site. Support will include:

- Development of a detailed launch plan to establish The STEM Cohort® on your campus
- Development of a recruitment plan for enrolling students into the program
- Training of all mentors to understand the program model, founding principles, culturally responsive mentoring, and mentoring best practices used by the program
- Development of an assessment strategy in collaboration with your institution's data-gathering or evaluation teams
- Development of a fundraising plan and proposal in collaboration with your development division to help you increase local resources
- Identification of barriers to program success and development of a mitigation plan to reduce or eliminate the impact they might have
- Access to our network of diverse STEM professionals who participate in the program as mentors, speakers, and advocates to enhance your programming efforts. The Foundation also assists in building your local professional network.

The STEM Cohort® aims to foster both the Resilience and Prospering of our STEM-aspiring scholars. This proven program has done that since 2017! As of Summer 2024, the first cohort now has a **100% graduation rate!***

The first graduating cohort of STEM Cohort scholars (23 scholars, all not pictured)

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