

# ACCESS Summer Student Research Program

## Goal:

Student research placements have many benefits for students, faculty members, as well as organizations. For student, research placements provide them with exposure and hands-on experience with a scientific field that is often difficult to obtain otherwise. Such placements, in turn, allow students to develop skill sets in research methodology as well as discover and cultivate an interest in research (Legget, 2023). They can also solidify a student's interest in a given area of study. Previous studies have shown that students (undergraduate, graduate and health care professional) who participated in a summer research program have a greater interest in pursuing graduates studies and/or integrating research into their future career (Okochi et al, 2023; Johnson et al, 2003). This is also true of cancer related summer research programs (Desmond et al, 2016). Finally, summer research programs also allow for positive engagement with a diverse group of students including some groups which may be underrepresented within the research community (Lieberman et al, 2023).

An integral component to student's success in such programs and fostering their interest in research is mentorship. The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine defines mentorship as "the professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development and success of the relational partners through the provision of career and psychosocial support" (REF).

The benefits of mentorship for academic faculty are well established. These include: stronger sense of professional identity, higher productivity enhanced networking and job opportunities, greater satisfaction with organization, low attrition rates, and increase the likelihood of them mentoring others (Gruber et al, 2020). For students, mentorship is suggested to enhance their interest pursuing a career involving research as well as enhance skill development (Fernandez et al, 2019; Morales et al 2019; Estrada et al 2018; Kiersma et al 2012). Mentorship can take many forms including one-on-one mentorship and peer mentorship (Atkar et al 2021).

## Summer Research Program Opportunities:



**Educational Seminars**

Live interactive seminars on pediatric oncology and scholarly topics



**Networking Opportunity**

Opportunities to connect with peers, mentors and broader pediatric oncology community



**Research Day**

Opportunities for participants to provide a short presentation of their project to ACCESS community

## Objective:

The Summer Student Research Program (SSRP) was outlined in the initial CIHR proposal. This program is a virtual education program that will be available to any student (undergraduate, graduate, health care professional) working within the ACCESS community. It runs from annually from May to mid-August. The objective of this program is the enhance students' interest in pediatric cancer research and encourage them to pursue a career within this field (whether it be research or in another capacity).

The more specific aims are to:

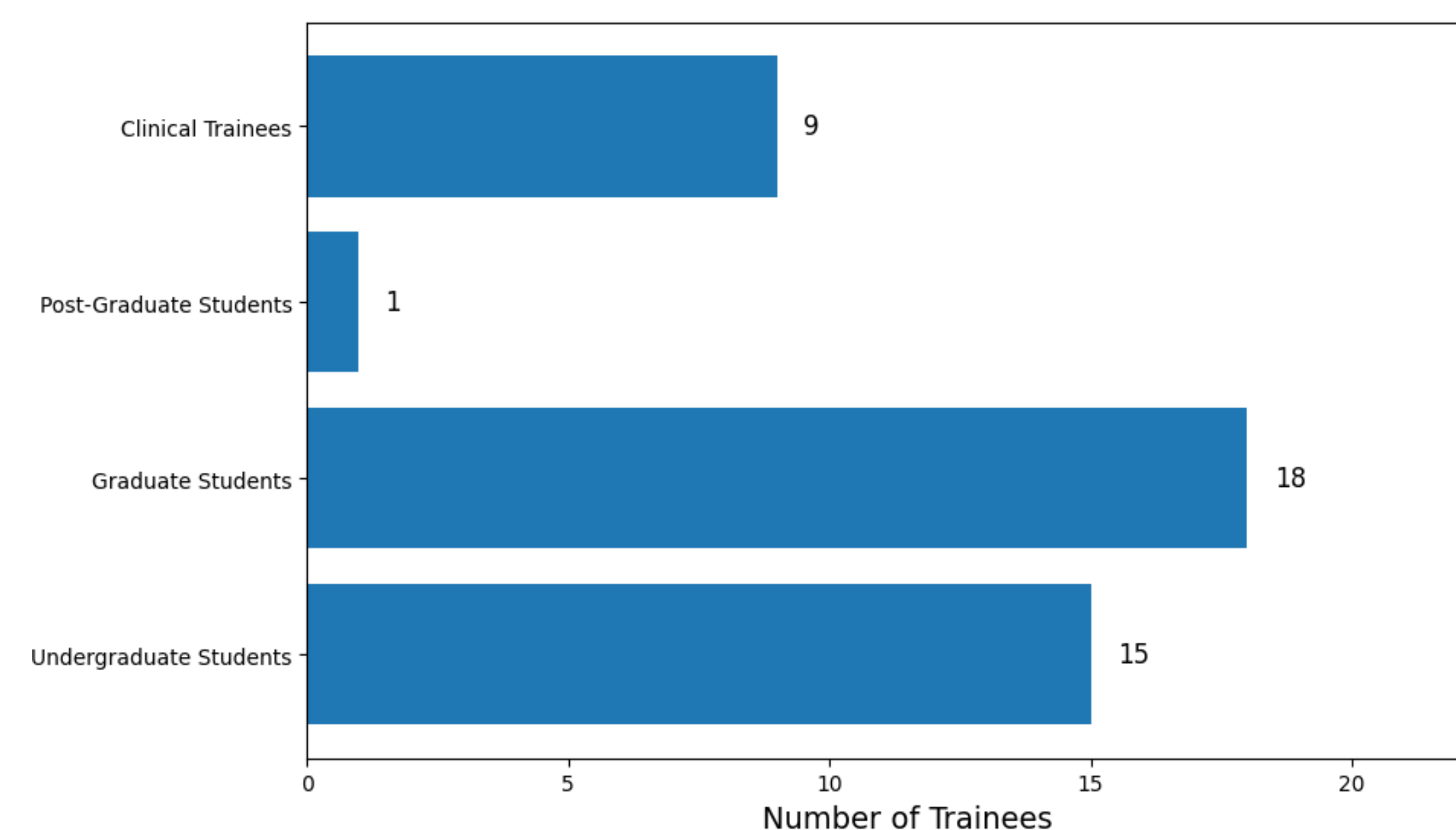
- Enhance students' exposure to pediatric cancer and its impact of patients, families and the wider community.
- Facilitate students' interest and skill set in research, particular within the field of pediatric cancer research.
- Create a community of pediatric cancer researchers and trainees across the country.

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## Summer Research Program Schedule:

Date	Time (ET)	Event
Monday June 9	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Orientations – Introduction to ACCESS and to the Program</b>
Monday June 16	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Introduction to Pediatric Oncology</b>
Monday June 23	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Introduction to Pediatric Research and Types of Research - Speed Networking</b>
Monday June 30		<b>No Session</b>
Monday July 7	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Conversation about Patient &amp; Family Engagement: Where can we start?</b>
Monday July 14	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Knowledge Mobilization – Use of Social Media within Research</b>
Monday July 21	12:00-1:00pm	<b>Career Development – Kick starting your career!</b>
Monday July 28		<b>No Session</b>
Wednesday August 6	12:00-3:00pm	<b>ACCESS Summer Research Day 2025</b> <i>More information to come!</i>

## Impact - Outcomes:



## Methods:

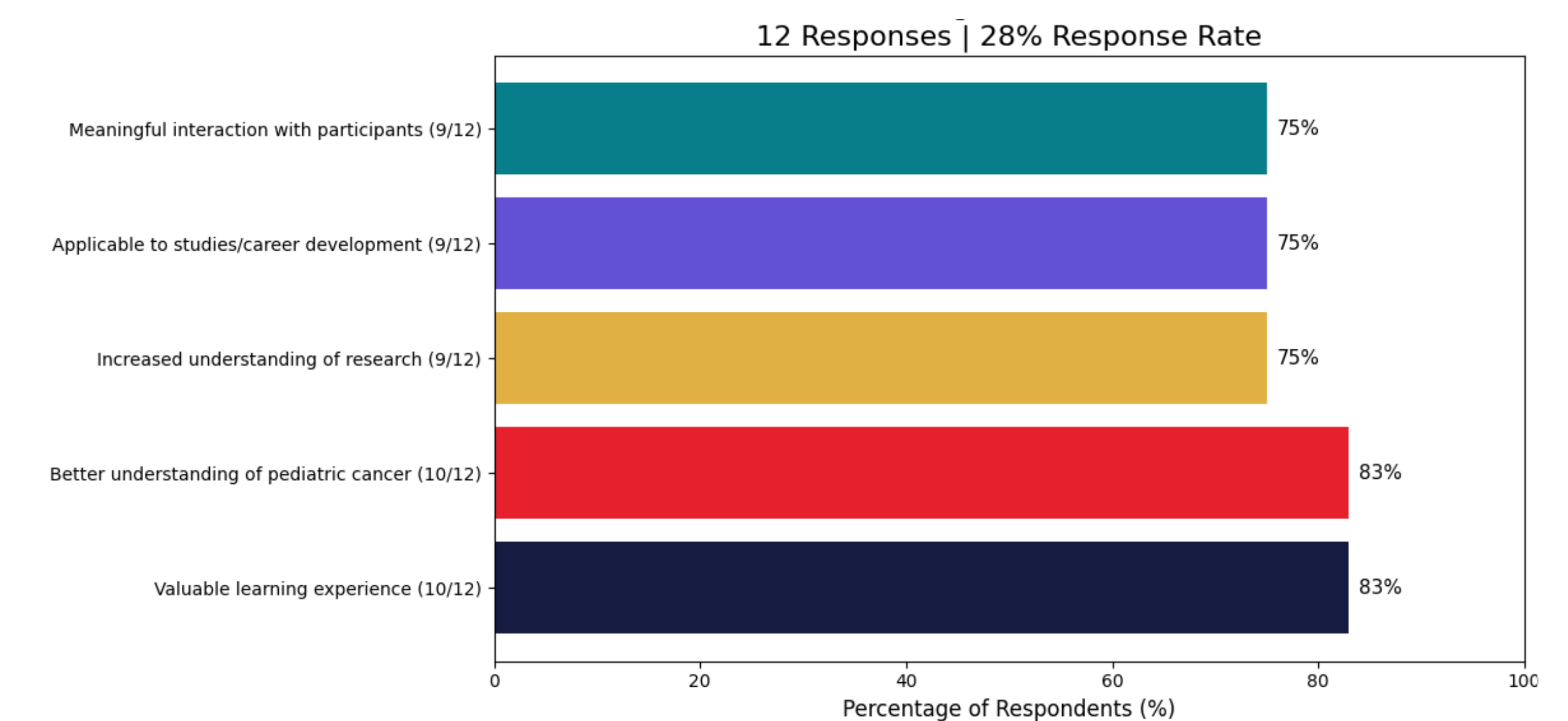
The plan for creating a SSRP is outlined within the attached proposal. In summary, the program will consist of a:

- Onboarding process to orientate students to ACCESS, the Canadian pediatric cancer community and research in general. Mentorship and networking opportunities will be emphasized during this process.
- Educational program, which will provide students the opportunity to learn about different research methodologies and career paths within pediatric oncology research. Students will also have the option to present their work for feedback from the larger ACCESS community.
- Virtual ACCESS Research Day. Here students will be asked to provide a short presentation of their work they completed during the summer. The goal of this event is show case students' work and allow them to further build their skill set in academic presentations and know translation.
- Program evaluation. A formative evaluation will be created to learn about participant's experience and how the program can be improved for future years.

## Evaluations:

### Summer Research Program Evaluation's:

- 12 students completed the evaluation, representing a response rate of 28%.
- The majority of students either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the program was a valuable learning experience (10/12).
- Provided them with a better understanding of pediatric cancer and its impact on Canadian children (10/12).
- Increased their understanding of research and research methodology (9/12).
- Provided them with information they could apply to their studies/career development (9/12).
- 9/12 students also somewhat or strongly agreed the program allowed them to meaningfully interact with other participants.



### Summer Research Day Evaluation's:

- 19 students completed the evaluation, representing a response rate of 44%.
- The mean score from 1-5 (with 5 being strongly agree) was as follows:
- The research day effectively highlighted the work of students participating in the program = 4.11 .
- The length of the student presentations were appropriate = 4.11.
- There were sufficient opportunities to ask questions and engage with presenters = 4.05.
- I found the ACCESS summer research day to be an enjoyable and valuable experience = 4.00.

