UCSF Fresno Doctors Academy Students Work Alongside Physicians This Summer

FRESNO – Nearly 70 high school seniors from the UCSF Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and Research (LaCMER) Doctors Academy (DA) are participating in the 2015 Doctors Academy Senior Summer Clinical Internship and Research Program. A total of 77 health professionals from 15 health institutions including Adventist Health Clinics, Clinica Sierra Vista, Community Regional Medical Center, Selma and Fresno Kaiser Permanente, Valley Children’s Hospital and other local clinical sites are participating and providing students with mentorship and real-world experiences. The program runs through July 24. It kicked off June 22 with a welcome by Michael Peterson, MD, associate dean at UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program.

Under the leadership of Katherine A. Flores, MD, director of the UCSF Fresno LaCMER, the summer program provides Doctors Academy students who are entering their senior year of high school with six weeks of hands-on clinical and research exposure. Students are placed with health professionals in clinical health settings three days per week where they learn first-hand, the day-to-day role and responsibilities of providing health care in the community.

“We are extremely grateful to all of our clinical providers and clinical locations for offering our students the opportunity to shadow health professionals and gain direct exposure to careers in health and medicine,” said Flores. “The Valley suffers from a shortage of physicians and other allied healthcare professionals. The providers participating in this summer clinical program are donating their expertise and time to help mentor and grow future health care professionals who ideally will remain in the region to provide culturally responsive care.”

Two days per week, DA seniors attend a research course at the UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research in downtown Fresno. The course is taught by a research instructor and facilitated by undergraduate college students – many of them are DA alumni themselves and are now participants in LaCMER’s Fresno State Health Careers Opportunity Program.

In addition, the DA seniors must complete a secondary research project related to their clinical area of interest with a focus on particular health issues impacting diverse communities. This experience offers students the opportunity to gain more knowledge and understanding of our community health care needs and is intended to inspire them to return to be health providers in the Central Valley.

Prior to their research course, DA seniors take part in a workshop at Fresno State on “Information Competency” to learn how to extract creditable journal articles related to their health research topic. In addition, students learned how to use a university library.

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Laptops were provided for each student thanks to generous support from Caruthers, Selma and Fresno school districts. Caruthers and Selma school districts provided their participating students with transportation to and from Fresno State and to the UCSF Fresno Center. The partnering school districts also contribute to the cost of the instructor for the research course and college facilitators.

Students will present the findings from their research projects at the Doctors Academy Senior Symposium on Thursday, July 23 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research, located at 155 N. Fresno Street.

Clinical mentors and participating sites will be recognized. Invited guests include students, parents and families, community supporters and partnering school site administrators and teachers.

For more information, please contact Director Katherine A. Flores, MD, or Education Director Bertha A. Dominguez at (559) 241-7670 or by email at kflores@fresno.ucsf.edu or bdominguez@fresno.ucsf.edu

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UCSF Fresno, established in 1975 and now celebrating its 40th anniversary, plays a vital role in providing healthcare services to residents of the San Joaquin Valley, training medical professionals in the region, conducting research that addresses regional health issues and academically preparing a pipeline of students for careers in health and medicine. Please visit www.fresno.ucsf.edu

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