

## Underrepresented Students in STEM Symposium - Twin Cities Event Summary

After many months of planning and weeks of matched mentees and mentors working together to develop abstracts and posters, the USSS-TC symposium took place as an in-person event on September 24, 2022 on the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus. In total, we had 22 poster presenters and an additional 30+ attendees consisting of undergraduate research coordinators, STEM department heads from the University of Minnesota, 3M poster judges, their mentors, and guests. Our event began with introductory remarks from Prof. Christy Haynes followed by two poster sessions. A broad range of research spanning from mouse age-dependent brain repair abilities to synthesizing heteroacene chromophores from diimides was presented. Each poster presenter received significant constructive feedback from three poster judges. Throughout the day students met and connected with their mentor during a coffee hour, were paired with an industry partner for resume review, and had free headshots taken. We hosted two panel discussions about graduate student life and applying to graduate school with an underrepresented identity. The panel discussion was vibrant, and the panelists honestly shared thoughtful, practical insights. After the panel discussions, three poster presenters were honored with poster awards as part of closing remarks. In all, 35 volunteers and 29 mentors came together to provide and foster a community to make this event successful and allow BIPOC undergraduates to exercise their science identity.

We surveyed the students who attended USSS-TC following the event and received many positive comments and helpful information for future events. Some of the feedback and quotes include:

- All participants would encourage friends/peers to attend this event in the future
- The majority of students said that participating in USSS-TC increased their sense of belonging in STEM
  - “It was so nice to be in an environment where people have experienced similar cultural things to me. It made me feel like people with my experiences belong in STEM.”
  - “Everyone was so supportive and celebrated each other’s achievements, and everyone was very excited to help and share resources ”
  - “This symposium highlighted and elevated students of colors’ research and experiences in STEM which was incredibly impactful. It was great to hear from the panelists and get this type of exposure.”

With the generous help of your donation, we were able to host our research symposium and provide a full day of networking, scientific communication, and professional development for local undergraduate students. Funding and donations were used to support students in a number of ways including:

- Poster printing for presenters
- Free parking and transportation
- Lunch and refreshments throughout the day
- Poster programming, lanyards, and name tags for participants
- Goodie bags for all participants
- Poster awards and certificates
- Coffee shop gift cards to encourage mentors and mentees to meet and discuss their poster and abstract before the event
- Masks to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols



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