

*As part of the #ShutDownSTEM initiative, a group of Charlotte Research Scholar students and mentors met on 6/10/2020 to talk about ways in which the Biology Department can be more inclusive. These are some ideas that were shared during the meeting:*

### **1. Implement Lessons from the Charlotte Teachers Institute Program**

- a. Can we incorporate conversations about race and diversity into our classes and/or labs?

The course Lenora Crabtree (current PhD student in COED, former non-thesis Masters student in BIOL) and Adam Reitzel designed and offered can be found [here](#). Adam also has lecture slides he can share with anyone interested. The fellows in the class are K-12 educators in CMS schools. They each developed an individual curriculum plan for their classrooms which are [freely available](#). This class was an amazing experience. During this course and since then, Adam has been working to educate himself more as well as identify topics that may fit well into classrooms. Lenora has continued as well and is near completion of her PhD, where she has done some amazing research on Critical Science Consciousness. Lenora would be a tremendous partner for the department.

### **2. Tackle Pipeline Problems**

- a. Outreach to k-12 students. The Department participates in Science Fest, which was canceled this year. Are there other opportunities for our faculty and students to interact with k-12 students? We should do a better job at promoting.

One approach is to work more with COED directly. They work very closely with public school systems and are training the future educators in these schools. Also, we have some ideas and unsuccessful proposals to fund graduate student engagement with K-12 schools that we could dust off again.

- b. Seeing the biology degree as a way to build skills for a diversity of careers rather than narrowing down to a very specific career. How can more students get involved in the LEADS program?

Adam Reitzel can help here as the department LEADS fellow. A couple ways students can get involved: check out the [LEADS site](#), take courses for the [certificate](#), and interact with [faculty in the program](#). In many ways LEADS is about mindset and career preparedness.

### **3. Increase Resources for Transfer Students**

The community college classroom environment is very different from the environment students encounter at UNCC. For one, the number of students in each course is higher. This can be a challenge to everyone, especially students from underrepresented groups and first generation students.

- a. The SPARC Program is one way to help students transition. What are other ways in which we help transfer students
- b. The Bridges Program will have first cohort of students in fall 2020.
- c. Is the CCC/UNCC initiative something we can look at?

A former non thesis Masters student Minnie Webster (now PhD student at NC State) and Adam Reitzel looked into this quite a bit. There are opportunities here and challenges. SPARC is a wonderful model to replicate

#### **4. Promote (and Increase) Financial Resources**

Our students face financial barriers to complete their degrees and participate in research.

- a. What scholarships/funding sources are available to Biology majors? We could have a list of resources on our website.
- b. Paid REU opportunities. We have information on different programs posted in the [Biology website](#) and in the bulletin boards around the building. Do we do enough to talk to individual students about the opportunities available? Do we do enough to help them prepare the application materials?