

NACME RESEARCH BRIEF



AUGUST 2021

Ready, Set, Go!

NACME CORPORATE SCHOLARS PROGRAM: BUILDING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CAREER ACCELERATION AND STEM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

At this pivotal time in NACME's history, the organization has responded to a request from corporate partners and in Summer 2021 launched a Corporate Scholars program that included a paid internship experience. It has become increasingly clear that the academic pipeline in higher education depends on students' successful experiences inside and outside of the classrooms. Internship and co-op programs can serve as a conduit for attracting talented women and minority students to engineering by working closely with feeder schools to provide hands-on experiences and exposure to the field of engineering early in a student's academic career.

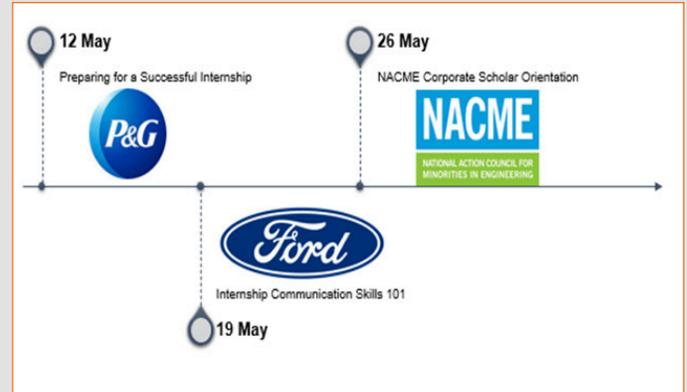
And while internships are not new, simply exposing undergraduates to the workplace or a research venue is not enough to support persistence in STEM,

as the student's perceived sense of support and belonging during the experience also matters (Barnes, 2018). The program design was also influenced by a sense of urgency to address stressors associated with a global pandemic and a heightened awareness of systemic racism. In fact, a poll of students attending NACME-sponsored professional development seminars during the 2020-21 academic year revealed that students desired help with dealing with the additional stress and would like NACME to provide programming to support their social and emotional well-being. To work towards addressing this issue, NACME worked in collaboration with corporate partners to offer a professional development workshop series. "Ready, Set, Go", to support students and learn more about the workplace cultures they experience. This Info Brief is the first in a series to provide information about the participants and feedback on the professional development webinars.

GETTING READY: PHASE 1

A workshop series entitled, "Ready, Set, Go" designed by the NACME program staff offered scholars professional development support during the month of April/May to prepare scholars as they transitioned from the academic setting. In this info-brief we share feedback from webinar participants regarding the quality of the presentations and their effectiveness in providing content to help students prepare for their internship experience.

The first two webinars were delivered by senior leadership from two of our esteemed board companies, Proctor & Gamble and Ford. Presenters shared insights with scholars on how to prepare for an amazing internship and offered strategies for effective communication in the workplace. The culminating event to "Get Ready" for their internships was the NACME Corporate Scholar's Orientation presented by NACME's senior leadership.



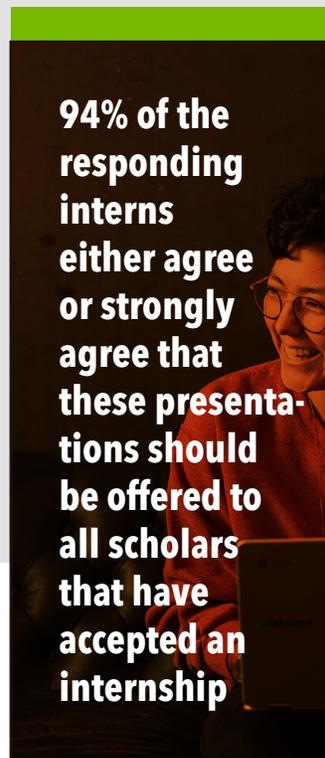
A total of 54 students were selected to participate in the inaugural cohort of NACME Corporate Scholars. All participants represent historically underrepresented groups in engineering and identified as either African American or Hispanic. Second year and third year students make up the bulk of the survey participants and are enrolled at eighteen of our thirty-six partner institutions.

Student Feedback on Webinar Quality and Internship Preparedness

The webinar series was open to all NACME scholars yet the majority of attendees identified as Corporate Scholars and the majority of responders indicated that this would be their first internship.



Each of the three webinars presented during the "Getting Ready" part of the series received high marks on both the quality of the content as well as the perceived value in preparing scholars for the internship. For each presentation students gave the highest rating to preparation and knowledge of the presenters. They also indicated that the information provided was helpful in preparing them to have a successful internship experience and built their confidence.

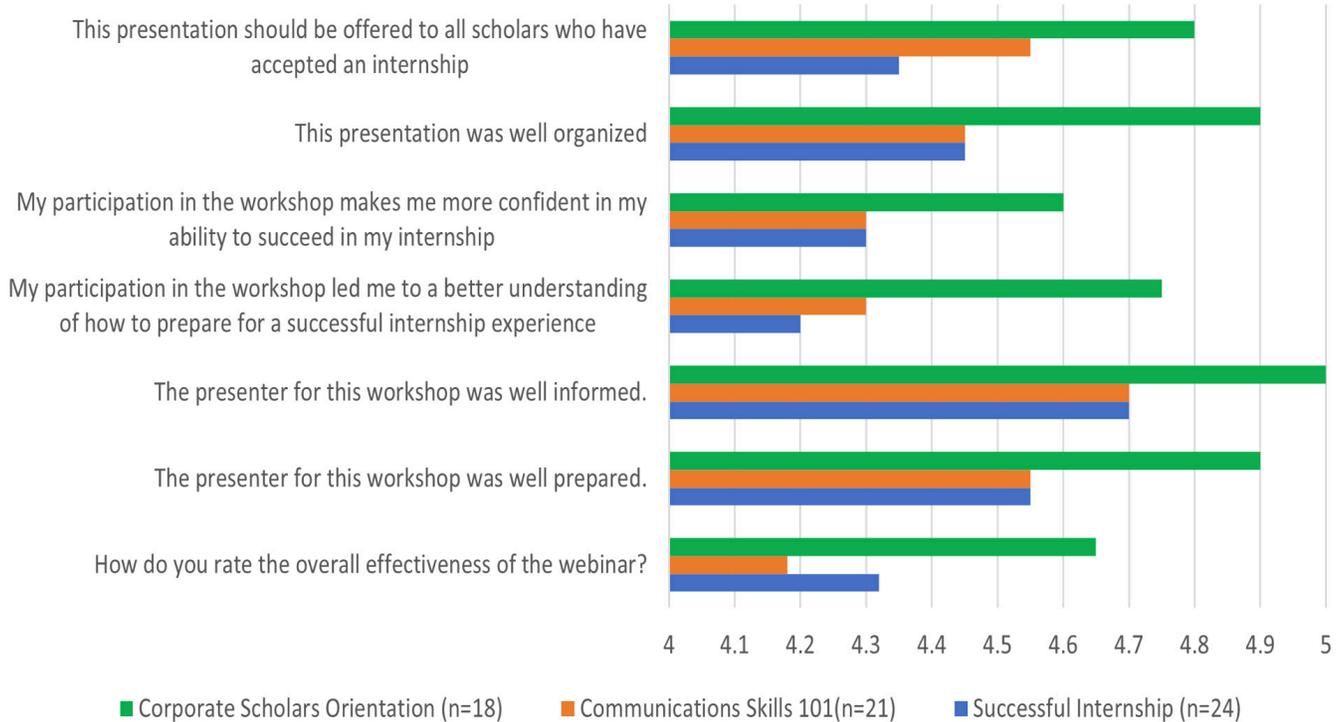


Students also indicated that they thought all interns should participate in this type of training and gave the highest mark of 4.8 out of 5 to the Corporate Scholars Orientation.

Overall, the series was well received and the students offered insightful feedback about the benefits of the informational sessions as well as recommendations for additional topics to help them prepare for a successful internship experience. In many cases, the recommendations align with the topics selected for the presentations planned for later in the summer.

Student Feedback on the Webinar Quality and Internship Preparation

1= Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree



Below are selected comments from survey participants on the most impactful aspects of the sessions offered to kick-off the internship experience.

PREPARING A SUCCESSFUL INTERN

Communication skills using the CAR technique

Stressing the importance of performance

The question-and-answer portion

Make sure to focus on performance

Learning how to properly communicate in a professional environment

Communication skills using the CAR technique

"I liked how they offered critical professional information in the workplace and real-world examples. It was great to hear about how these types of situations are applicable to our co-ops or internships."

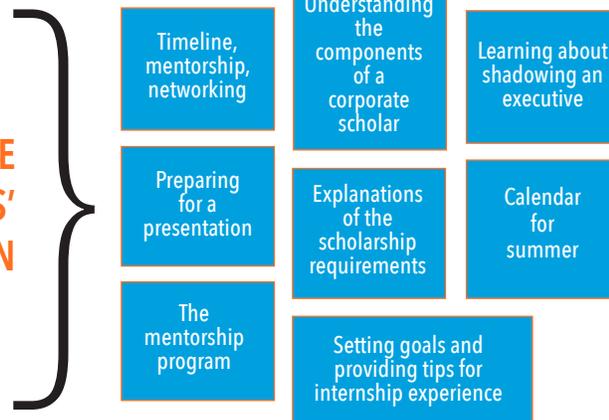
- Intern

"It is firsthand, real experience that we can learn from, as we will one day be in those situations."
- Intern



INTERN COMMUNICATION SKILLS 101

CORPORATE SCHOLARS' ORIENTATION



"Michele made it an amazing and welcoming environment to ask questions. Most informative was seeing what would be required at the end of the summer."
- Intern

NEXT UP: GET SET! GO!

The schedule below provides the session titles for content that focuses on the "GET Set! Go phase of the professional development series offered throughout the summer in partnership with our amazing corporate partners. These sessions were open to all participants in NACME sponsored programs (NACME Scholars, Google AMLI Bootcamp attendees and the Corporate Scholars). The series brought scholars together to create community and a safe place for them to hear from STEM professionals providing culturally responsive content specifically designed to address common issues that arise as they transition from college campuses to corporate settings. Likewise, the webinars were designed to be interactive and provided a venue for students to engage with the facilitators and with each other. Each attendee was invited to provide feedback on the session. Additionally, we reached out to the Corporate Scholars to learn more about their internship experience.

We will share findings from the 2021 NACME Corporate Scholars Program in a later volume of this series.

