

FSU College of Medicine recognized for diversity success

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The Florida State University College of Medicine Bridge Program's Class of 2019. The College has been recognized for its programs to enhance diversity in the medical profession. Bridge recruits applicants from underserved backgrounds to the program.

The Florida State University College of Medicine has received the 2019 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine.

The award recognizes U.S. medical, dental, pharmacy, osteopathic, nursing, veterinary, allied health and other health schools and centers demonstrating an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. The College of Medicine, one of 43 health-professions programs honored, is receiving the award for a third consecutive year.

“This medical school was created with a goal of helping to meet health-care needs in communities that have traditionally struggled to provide adequate access to care,” College of Medicine Dean John P. Fogarty said.

“This award really recognizes the fact that we are true to our mission and we are succeeding in producing the physicians Florida — as well as the rest of the U.S. — needs most. That includes our record of producing numerous alumni who now practice in rural parts of the state, especially in Northwest Florida.”

The College of Medicine has developed several pipeline programs successful at bringing more students into medical school from communities that are underrepresented in the physician workforce. Two of those programs in particular have helped to produce physicians now caring for patients in communities that traditionally struggled to recruit new doctors.

SSTRIDE (Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity and Excellence) identifies students as early as the eighth grade who have an aptitude for science and math and the potential to be developed into a successful medical school applicant. The Bridge Program gives applicants from underserved backgrounds, both inner-city and rural, the opportunity to prepare for medical school through a one-year master's program.

“Our pipeline programs enhance the applicant pool with qualified candidates who have a significant interest in serving patients where health-care needs are the greatest,” said Kema Gadson, assistant dean for Student Affairs and Diversity. “The outreach programs play an important role in how the College of Medicine meets its mission.”

HEED Award institutions were selected based on “recruitment and retention of students and employees — and best practices for both; continued leadership support for diversity; and other aspects of campus diversity and inclusion.”

The College of Medicine is one of only three medical schools (along with UCLA and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) ranked among the top programs nationally for enrollment of both black and Hispanic students. Nearly 100 alumni physicians are practicing in the Florida Panhandle, from Perry to Pensacola, caring for a significant number of patients from rural areas.

The FSU College of Medicine and other HEED recipients will be featured in the December issue of *Insight Into Diversity*.