

Center for Learner Diversity and Inclusion

EQUITY IMPACT REPORT



Summer 2025





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Letter from the CLDI

01

Hello!

This year we were thrilled to host students from across the nation! It was an honor to serve our future research scientists and doctors. The Equity Research Program has been proudly serving undergraduate students for a number of years, opening pathways, and ensuring that they know OHSU is a place where they can achieve their goals, make lasting connections, be part of something special, and feel like they belong.

Thank you,



Program Manager Andrew Justicia and Administrative Coordinator Wes Studer

Program Overview

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The goal of the Equity Research Program is to give hands-on experience in research and science to learners from underserved communities across the nation. The Equity program strives to increase the enrollment of underrepresented minorities in STEM fields.

Program Highlights 03

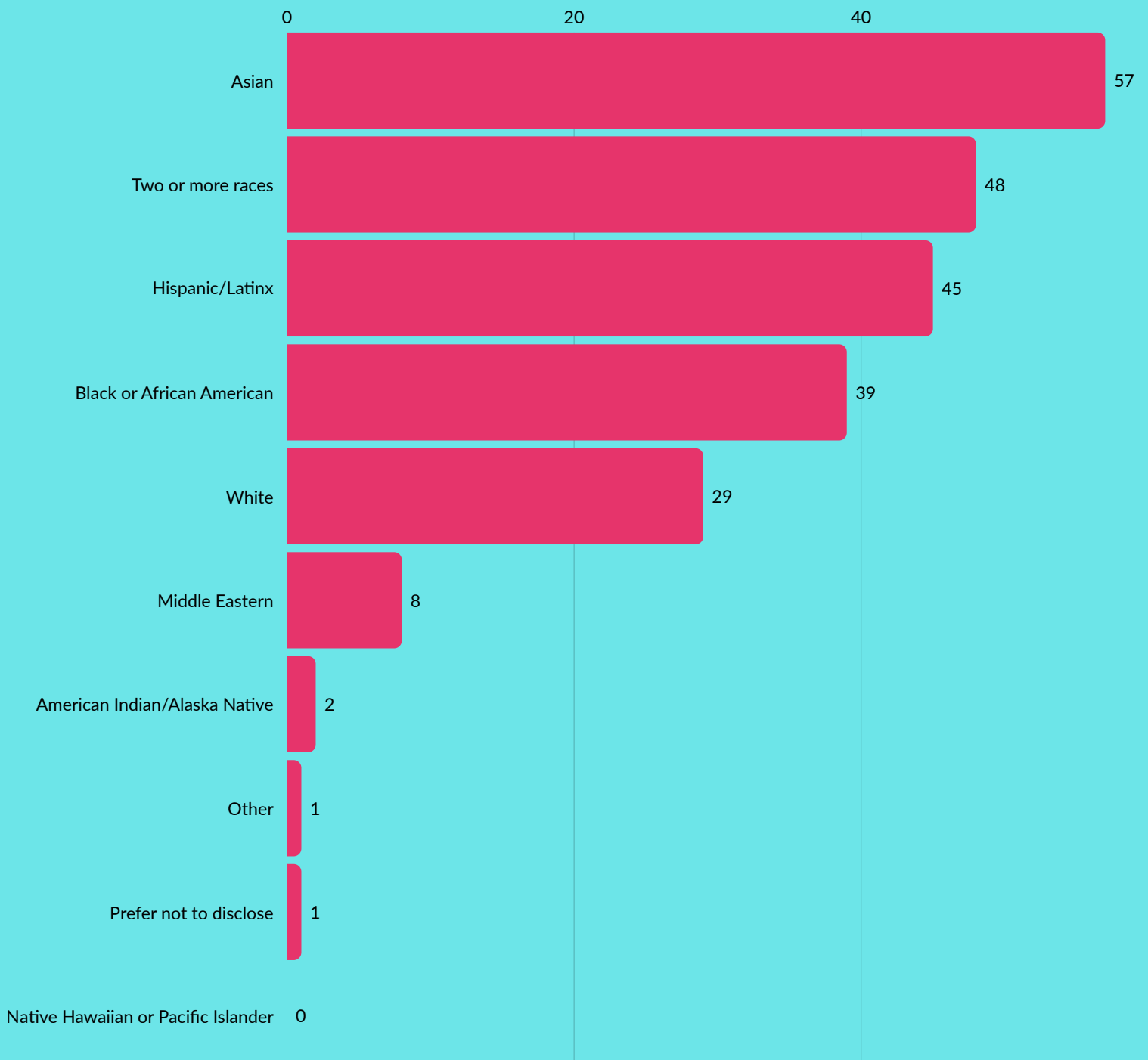
The Equity program had four tracks this year: School of Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, School of Dentistry, and School of Public Health. The students conducted research in their respective labs and participated in weekly seminars. At the culmination of their internship, they presented their work at the OHSU Internship Program Symposium



Applicant Overview

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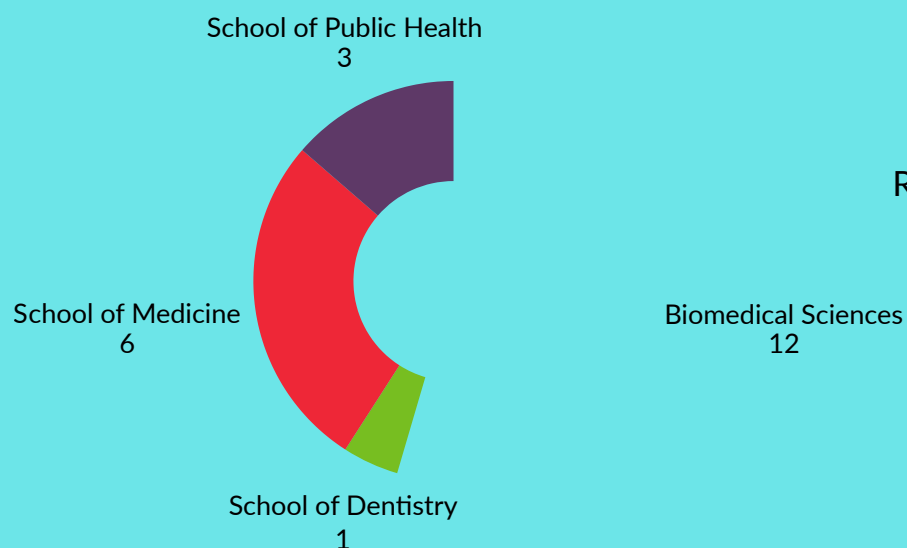
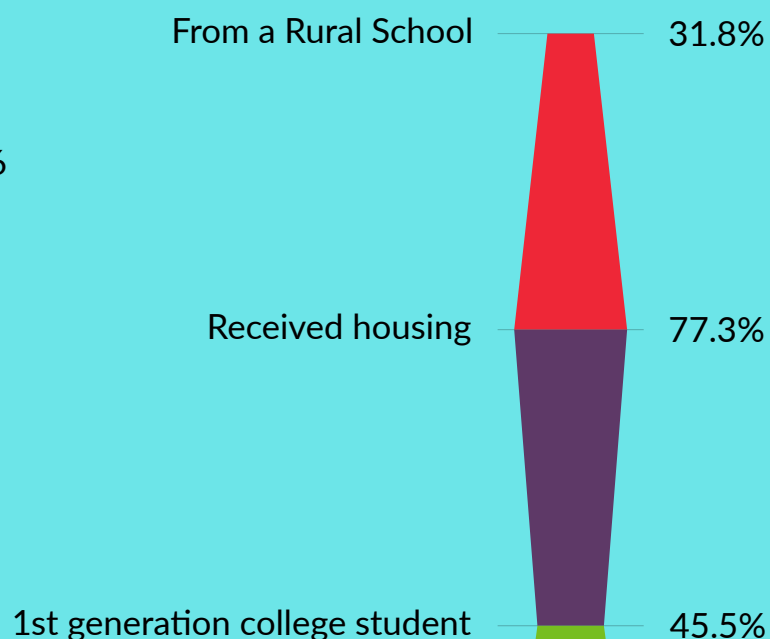
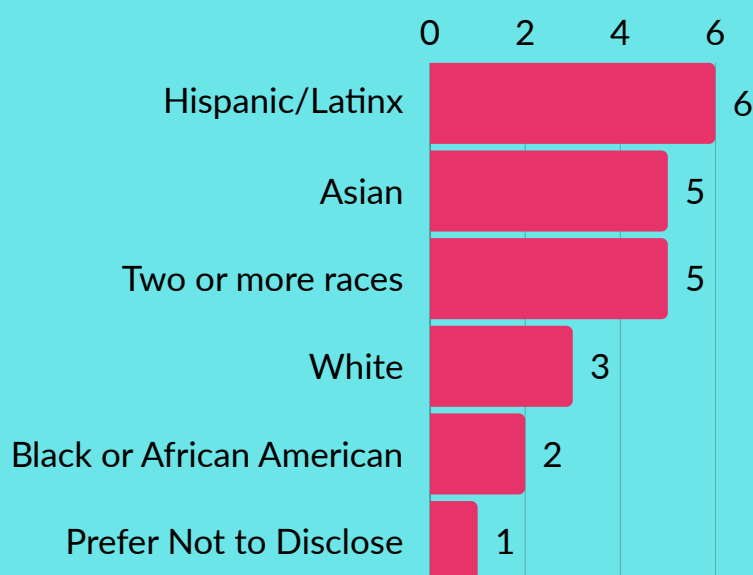
The Equity Program is a highly sought after internship. From year to year, we see a diverse and extremely competitive pool of applicants. In 2025, we had 230 applicants interested in joining our cohort.



Cohort Demographics

Our 2025 intern cohort was comprised of 22 students within the 4 tracks. Each intern successfully completed the eight-week program, working with their research mentor and participating in program seminars and activities.

Our cohort was...





Emma Aguilar Torres
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Carolyn Schutt Ibsen, Ph.D., Kira Lynch, B.S.

Developing a Model of Early Breast Cancer Using Ultrasound Responsive Microbubbles in a 3D Hydrogel



Camila Cardozo
St. Mary's University

Mentor(s): Summer Gibbs, Ph.D.

Design and Optimization of an Antibody Panel for Rare Cell Detection in Tissue Using Cyclic Immunofluorescence



Jessica Chavez Chairez
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Stuart Ibsen, Ph.D.

Isolation of Cancer-Associated Nanoparticles From Cerebrospinal Fluid Using Dielectrophoresis



Cherry Chen
John Hopkins University

Mentor(s): Daniel Zuckerman, Ph.D.

Uncovering Low-Dimensional Patterns in Cancer Genomics



Annabel Jensen
Portland State University

Mentor(s): Angela Ozburn, Ph.D.

Nucleus Accumbens Projections and Whole Brain c-Fos Induction in Response to Binge-like Ethanol Drinking in High Drinking in the Dark line 1 Mice



Ayo Kayode-Popoola
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Jonathan Pruneda, Ph.D.

Decoding viral DUBs: Investigating non-canonical ubiquitin signals regulated by Herpesviruses



Thao Le
University of California-Davis

Mentor(s): Hui Wu, Ph.D.

Different Bacterial Species Disrupting Streptococcus mutans and Candida albicans Symbiotic Relationship in Multispecies Oral Biofilm



Michelle Lopez Padilla
University of Oregon

Mentor(s): Lauren Rodda, Ph.D.

Investigating the Role of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Factors in Upper Respiratory Tract Memory B Cell and Splenic Memory B Cell Humoral Response



Qiying Ma
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Suzanne Fei, Ph.D.

Disentangling Blood vs. Brain Signals in Alcohol-Induced Gene Expression in Rhesus Macaques



Aali Maldonado
University of Washington

Mentor(s): Esther Choo, M.D., M.P.H.

Naloxone Distribution in the Emergency Department following SB 1043



Araylia-Marie Martinez
Clark College

Mentor(s): Monica Hinds, Ph.D.

Modeling Magnesium Surface Protein Adhesion to Assess Hemocompatibility



Sydney McFarlane
University of Maryland

Mentor(s): Charlotte (Charlie) Roscoe, Ph.D.

Advancing Green Care and Mental Health Equity in Multnomah County, Oregon



Taylor Montgomery
University of Georgia

Mentor(s): Isabella Rauch, Ph.D.

NLRC4 induction in human intestinal epithelial cells (IECs) and IEC's differentiation to enteroendocrine cells



Austin Murray
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Suzanne Mitchell, Ph.D.

Valuing the Past: Discounting Past Health, Everyday Life, and Substance Use Events



Josiah Pagel
Oregon State University

Mentor(s): Kathryn Holmes, M.D., M.P.H.

Impressions of accessibility and resource utilization of school age children with Marfan Syndrome



Qwyn Peterson
Portland State University

Mentor(s): Jeremy Copperman, Ph.D.

Learning the Language of Invasion: A Deep Learning Framework for Cell-Cell Interaction and ERK Signaling in Breast Cancer



Khadan Sangasy
Portland State University

Mentor(s): Omar Kamal, M.D.

Retrospective Analysis of Mesenteric Incidental "Misty Mesentery": Retrospective Evaluation of The Natural History of Mesenteric Panniculitis



Zoe Schuh
Portland State University

Mentor(s): Hannah Cory, Ph.D., M.P.H.

The Impact of Oregon's 2014 Medicaid Expansion on Low-Income Women



Claire Sherman
Lewis & Clark College

Mentor(s): Joshua Saldivar, Ph.D.

Investigating the efficacy and efficiency of ATR Inhibitors, MDM2 Inhibitors, and Senolytics on Halting Cell Proliferation



Paris Tilgner
Whitman College

Mentor(s): Lindsey Smith, Ph.D., M.P.P.

Understanding Health Services in Independent Living Communities



Isabella Villarreal-Elizondo
Seattle University

Mentor(s): Henry Lin, M.D., M.B.A.

Understanding Patient Perception of GI psychological services as a tool for improving health outcomes



Veronica Young
Portland Community College

Mentor(s): Adem Yildirim, PhD.

The Effects of Gas-Stabilizing Nanoparticles and High-Frequency Ultrasound on Melanoma Outcomes in vivo



Internship Enrichment

Program Schedule

In addition to the interns' research experience, the program included enrichment and professional development events throughout the eight-week internship.

- Library services workshop-literature review
- OHSU student leader roundtable and Q&A
- Student Academic Support Services speakers
- Group hike at Washington Park
- All-Campus Summer Welcome lunch hosted by OnTrack OHSU!
- Knight Cancer Director speaker
- School of Medicine and Outreach speakers
- Presentation by CLDI Associate Vice Provost
- ASIST Training
- Tours of Radiation Therapy Labs
- PARC/MARC Research Presentation
- OHSU Undergraduate Internships Gathering for all undergraduate interns on campus to meet with current OHSU students and Admissions representatives
- Educational Debt and Finance team presentation

Quotes from Interns:

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“This internship re-instilled my love of biomedical engineering and gave me the motivation to continue my academic journey despite the difficult classes. I have also chosen to pursue academia, given the support of my wonderful mentor and lab.”

“The Equity Internship fostered growth in so many different areas that I wouldn't be able to get anywhere else. Not only did I gain proficiency at technical lab skills in my specific field of oral microbiology, but I was also exposed to numerous fields of research and their lab skills. I slowly gained confidence in understanding the methods and reasoning of research, allowing me to potentially pursue research in addition to being a dental provider. I also enjoyed the seminars that addressed financial and mental struggles of working towards a career healthcare; they validated all my concerns. Additionally, the support from the program coordinators were beyond amazing. They believed in me and made me feel like I could accomplish anything. Along with the other interns, the Equity cohort felt like a family.”

“The Equity Program at OHSU led by Andrew and Wes was a truly invaluable experience. I learned so much about myself in various ways, especially professionally. This internship provided me with exemplary experience for my career goals as a researcher and allowed me to develop and refine skills pertaining to the professional world. Getting to know everyone in the cohort was one of my favorite aspects of the program, and the friendships I have made will last for a lifetime!”

“The CLDI Equity Internship was an unforgettable experience where I learned and applied different research methods. The project heavily relies on the expectations and guidance of the mentors. Overall, there was a strong sense of community among the interns.”

“I think mentorship is a word that can summarize this experience. I felt the OHSU community embrace me. Going out of state was scary, especially since I didn't know any of the other interns or the city. Yet, I felt supported in what I needed, from the program administrators to the mentors in my lab. There is definitely a teaching spirit in OHSU to help you grow.”

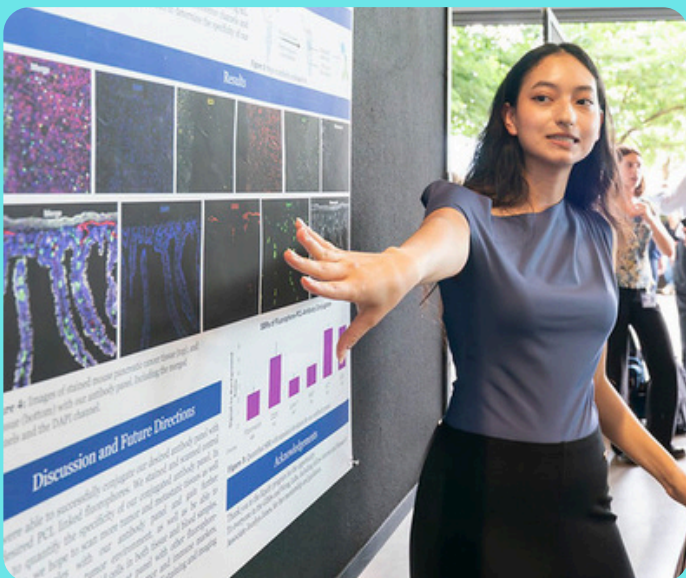
“I had an excellent experience during the internship. The support provided by CLDI and my mentor allowed me to explore my field of interest as an undergraduate researcher. I felt empowered by the mentorship as well as by the presenters in seminars.”

“My experience was a valuable step towards determining if my passion for medicine was real. In the internship, the focus was to nurture your growth and serve the community to educate and inspire others.”

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide access to aspiring health professionals, researchers, and clinicians from under-recognized, diverse backgrounds, and underserved communities across the nation to a world class medical and research internship experience at OHSU.

We take a holistic approach to supporting our interns. We leverage the OHSU community to provide a network of support for our interns. This intentional pathway work continues to lead OHSU on a journey to promote a more diverse healthcare workforce and to combat health inequities in population health, locally, rurally, and nationally.

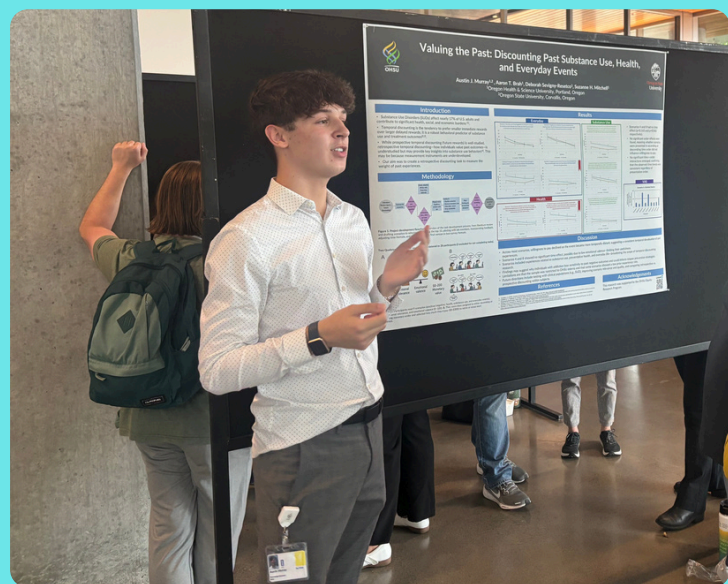


Acknowledgements

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The Equity Research Program would not be successful without the collaborators listed below. The Center for Learner Diversity and Inclusion would like to extend a big thank you to all the folks that contributed to the 2025 Equity Program. Thank you for your participation and support!

- OHSU Provost Office – Thank you for all you do for pathway programs at OHSU! Thank you for supporting the Equity Research Program.
- All the Equity Program mentors - Thank you mentors! You continue to open doors for our future researchers and providers! (see all the mentors listed under their respective intern).
- All the folks that presented and shared their expertise – The Equity Program schedule is dynamic and a great source of professional development. Thank you for all your contributions
- Catering Team FNS (Food Nutrition Services), Mich, and Joey, Ben Larson, Cho Mung, and Shannon Smejkal– You all are incredible, thank you for your dedication. Joey, thank you for always going above and beyond, you helped us move all those tables to the shade! Mich, thank you for being so reliable and always coming through for us. Your help with planning and assessing numbers for food, made for excellent enrichment events.
- Derrik, Jackie D., Ina, and Chelsea from the KC/CURE Program – Thank you for a great partnership. Your collaboration in planning for the Poster Symposium event helps make the event a fantastic collaborative demonstration of the OHSU community.
- OVV (Office of Visitors and Volunteers) Jennifer Conner – We could not have done our internship without you! You were simply amazing and helped us every step of the way. RIP Angel Almanza.



Acknowledgements ¹³

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Thank you to the application scoring panel for the 2025 Equity applicants:

Annae Nichelson
Bettie Kareko
Hillary Le
Kelsie Johnson
Laura Chan
Morgan Gross
Pamela Meyers
Rodaba Rahim
Staci Ganje



Thank you to all our judges for the 2025 Symposium Poster Symposium event!

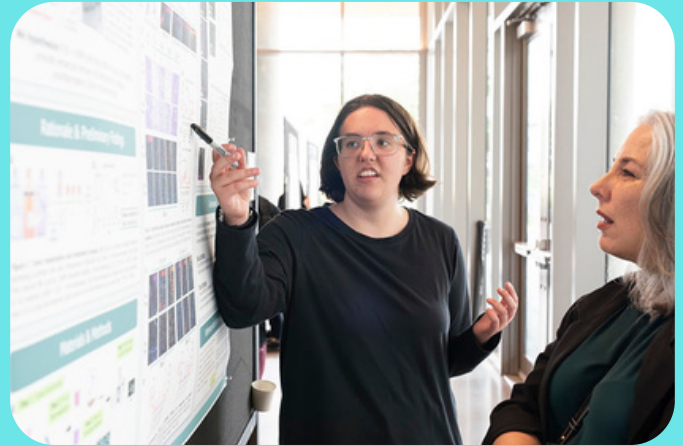


Hillary Le
Staci Ganje
Tova Kruss
Avery Richardson
Nya Mbock
Tony Munoz

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- OHSU ID Badge Team, Aden Romeo – Thank you for all your help ensuring that our interns had access to specific areas of OHSU. We appreciate your timely responses, and also for supporting our interns throughout their stay at OHSU.
- AP Stipends team, particularly Chase Weinhandl, and Syhzumi Yamada (Budget Manager for Provost Office) – Thank you for your help processing the stipends for our Equity Interns. You helped us meet expectations and maintain timelines for interns to receive their stipends.
- Greg Sabatka (OHSU Contracts) – Thank you for your help with the contract work for PSU Housing. We appreciate your team helping the Equity Program go smoothly through this very important work that happens behind the scenes.
- Amir Veshagh, Mohad Solgi, Michelle Wambui, and Mireya Jimenez-Magana, past Equity Program participants – Thank you for being part of our program, meeting our interns, reflecting on your experience, providing tips to gain maximum benefit from the internship, and your encouragement.
- EdComm and Jordan Sleeth (photographer) – Thank you for your efficient and professional photography services both during the Equity Program and the Research Poster Symposium!
- Strategic Communications – Seth, thank you for your contributions in helping us promote and design materials for the Poster Symposium! We appreciate your collaboration and are so grateful to have your help this summer!
- PSU Housing – Thank you for your hospitality for our interns this summer, we are grateful for your flexibility and the services provided to our administrative team!





Prepared by:
Andrew Justicia & Wes Studer
CLDI Student Retention and Recruitment team





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for Learner
Diversity and
Inclusion**

