Welcome to the 2014-2015 Academic Year! This year the IMSD Program selected 7 new undergraduate students and 6 new graduate students. IMSD Scholars began working in research labs across campus and identifying both individual and group goals to accomplish this year. One of the main goals was to strengthen the relationship and sense of community with former IMSD Scholars. After months of brainstorming ways to meet this goal, we have now launched the IMSD Ambassador Initiative.

The goal of the IMSD Ambassador initiative is to bring current and former IMSD scholars together around outreach activities and community service projects. During spring 2015, the IMSD Scholars will partner with elementary, middle and high school students to talk about the importance of science and what it means to be a scientist. It is hoped that this initiative will be mutually beneficial to both the Scholars and the K-12 student participants. It anticipated that the IMSD Scholars will increase their science identity and participating students will increase their interest in science.

In addition, the IMSD Program prides itself with creating a sense of community for its Scholars. While preparing the students to become outstanding researchers, the IMSD program also provides an environment for students to network with like-minded peers around issues that are pertinent to them and their success as they matriculate as students at a Research Intensive University. During the fall semester, IMSD Scholars participated in the annual retreat that was held at Camp Abermarle, in Newport, NC. IMSD Scholars networked with their peers, engaged in team building exercises and identified their individual and collective goals for the academic year using the Individual Development Plan and creating a vision board.

Furthermore, the IMSD Program is involved in actively creating alliances and “fixing the leaking STEM pipeline”. This semester, the IMSD Program hosted the fourth undergraduate Crosstalk. The crosstalk is a forum where undergraduate students from across the state are invited to present their research and network with IMSD students and faculty and staff at NC State. There were over 50 students in attendance with 10 oral research presentations given by undergraduate students. P Crosstalk participants included students from North Carolina Central University, Winston-Salem State University, Livingston College and non-IMSD scholars at NC State University. The IMSD Program will be hosting the next Crosstalk event Spring 2015.

Lastly, the IMSD Program at NC State was selected to host the 3rd Annual Mid-Atlantic Prep/IMSD Research Symposium (MAPRS). The purpose of this symposium is to provide networking and professional development opportunities for students, faculty, and administrators affiliated with the Mid-Atlantic PREP/IMSD Research Symposium network in the Southeast region. Participating MAPRS institutions are:

Virginia Tech University, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Maryland Baltimore County, Johns Hopkins University, Wake Forest University, Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill and NC State University. Our goal is to train and promote scientists of the next generation whose research interests are in the areas of biomedical and behavioral sciences. The Symposium will take place on May 20-21, 2015. For more information on MAPRS, please visit our website at www.ncsu.edu/imsd/maprs.html.

Scholars: Keep up the excellent work and Congratulations to Shima Idries for winning Best Poster at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in the area of Cell Biology.
My time in the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity (IMSD) research program has had an irreversibly positive impact on my undergraduate experience.

One of the reasons I am so grateful to be a part of IMSD is because of the connections I have developed with people I would have only met through this program. Because the behavioral and biomedical science areas are so interdisciplinary, I have been able to form relationships with professors, graduate students and other undergraduate scholars outside of my field in an inviting and noncompetitive format. The meaningful conversations that arise from these connections can facilitate new opportunities and open doorways that could have life-changing impacts on my future. In the short term, however, I am simply humbled to know that I have a network through IMSD that is supportive, uplifting, and accountable.

A fundamental component of IMSD is the cultivation of professional skills and research experience necessary to become a superior contributor in your field of study. In the last year I have gained a considerable amount of this essential research experience through the program’s financial and academic support. Not only has that assistance provided opportunities to present and discuss my research with scientists around the nation, but it has also helped me travel across the country for a summer research program at the California Institute of Technology. While studying at Caltech, I realized that I had the appropriate preparation to actively participate in a new research topic with an unfamiliar group. I know that IMSD played a large role in this preparation and it is experiences like these that will have life-changing impacts on my future as a Ph.D. candidate and beyond.

Overall I am increasingly excited to be an undergraduate IMSD scholar and to engage with the people, research, and professional development opportunities that comprise this program.
The Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity (IMSD) Program provides the opportunity for minority students to fully engage in research labs on NC State's campus with outstanding faculty members. I am a sophomore majoring in Mathematics but I plan to switch to Biological Sciences with a concentration in Integrative Physiology and Neurobiology. Because of the IMSD program, I am more certain of my plans after undergrad than ever before. During the annual retreat, I was able to connect with students who shared an interest in fields such as chemistry, engineering, physics, and even psychology. Conversing with students from different backgrounds and various perspectives allowed me to embrace diverse ideas around similar topics. The IMSD Program offers events including crosswalks, research conferences, as well as alliance programs with UNC Chapel-Hill and Duke University. Within my first semester as an IMSD undergraduate scholar I have regained my passion for research in the biological field and am now certain that I wish to pursue a career in psychiatry. Because of the IMSD Program, I am both confident and prepared about what my future holds.

Jakini Kauba
IMSD Graduate Student, Psychology

My experience in the IMSD program has been both a formative and fulfilling one on both the undergraduate and—especially—the graduate levels. As an undergraduate at Virginia Tech, I was transitioning into a different discipline—from sociology to psychology—and the IMSD program connected me with a group of diverse, research-focused, and community-oriented faculty and students. I received valuable support from the administration as well as mentoring from my faculty adviser. Since entering the IMSD program at Virginia Tech, I have grown substantially as a young investigator. I mastered the laboratory environment, became familiar with psychological research methods, and gained experience with experimental instruments. Further, the group of faculty, staff, and students truly created an atmosphere of validation; everyone could contribute to the “conversation.” So, whereas my undergraduate experiences were characterized by much turbulence as I attempted to navigate an unfamiliar terrain, my transition into the graduate IMSD program has been nothing less than reaffirming and comforting. I feel that my experiences as a graduate student in the program have already added value to my training and professional development. In one way, the IMSD and psychology department communities build a scaffold which enables me to grow in a multi-dimensional way, unlike any program I have participated in. Additionally, the department as a whole has been very supportive. As I hone in on my skills as a researcher, the IMSD program allows me to plug-in to a network of people who are diverse in their backgrounds, training, goals, and interests. In another manner, since coming into the IMSD program at NC State, I have been actively engaged in mentoring and look forward to participating in science education service activities. These aspects of the program have had a significant impression on me, and I am eager to continue a legacy of mentorship and outreach on the post-doctoral and faculty levels (although it seems so far away!). I am confident that my graduate experiences, in part due to my engagement in IMSD, will play an extremely transformative role in my development as an investigator.

Erica Lee
IMSD Graduate Student, Psychology

The fit between my interests and experiences were well-matched to that of my faculty adviser and mentor, Dr. Thomas Hess, in the Department of Psychology. Additionally, the department as a whole has been very supportive. As I hone in on my skills as a researcher, the IMSD program allows me to plug-in to a network of people who are diverse in their backgrounds, training, goals, and interests. In another manner, since coming into the IMSD program at NC State, I have been actively engaged in mentoring and look forward to participating in science education service activities. These aspects of the program have had a significant impression on me, and I am eager to continue a legacy of mentorship and outreach on the post-doctoral and faculty levels (although it seems so far away!). I am confident that my graduate experiences, in part due to my engagement in IMSD, will play an extremely transformative role in my development as an investigator.
IMSD Paved the Way

Danielle Batin, M.Ed.

I joined the IMSD Program in the Fall of 2009. As an undergraduate in Psychology, I conducted research under Dr. Shevaun Neupert in Lifespan Developmental Psychology as well as under John Begeny in School Psychology. With Dr. Begeny, I analyzed academic gains in reading fluency in elementary students. This was my first encounter with the widening academic achievement gap in at-risk children. Furthermore, my work with Dr. Neupert allowed me to see cognitive development across the lifespan. The research I conducted in both labs influenced my calling in working for and with people of the community.

IMSD also gave me the opportunity to connect with amazing researchers, professors and student leaders. It was through my IMSD network that I found out about Teach for America and applied for the program my senior year. Throughout my two year commitment in Las Vegas, I was exposed to the growing number of low performing schools that serve low income, minority students. My Kindergarten students, although eager to learn, already experienced financial and personal hardships that affected their relationship with education. My goal through those two years was to make a transformational change within students’ lives, as well as their parents, to rise above their hardships and invest in education. IMSD provided me the opportunity to see myself, an Asian American woman, capable of undergraduate research. It was my chance to show students and their parents, they were capable of academic success too.

Now, as a Teach for America alum, I decided to stay in Las Vegas to continue my career as an educator as well as a mentor for new Teach for America corps members. I wanted to return to NC State to share how my IMSD experience has impacted my life today. IMSD gave me the opportunity to work with researchers who I now consider mentors and supporters. IMSD exposed me to research that showcased how people’s everyday conditions and lives affected their cognitive and intellectual ability, factors that I now take into mind for my classroom. Most importantly, IMSD affirmed the idea that the world needs more young minority men and women to become role models for the next generation. IMSD paved the way for me to realize the potential I have to impact the world and the lives for others. It can be that experience for you too.
Growing together

IMSD at NC State

Learning together

IMSD at North Carolina State University

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Principal Investigator – Trudy Mackay, Ph.D
Co-Principal Investigator – David Shafer, Ph.D

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