

UCSF PRIME-US and Pipeline Programs

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by Liberty Reforma, 2nd Year UCSF PRIME-US Student

Before entering PRIME, I was familiar with the concept of a “pipeline program” – in fact, in high school, I had participated in one such program myself. These programs aim to increase the diversity of the healthcare field by engaging students from underrepresented backgrounds. To me, an aspiring doctor since the age of 14, they were just a cool way to get to see what doctors really do on a regular basis.

I remember actively participating in activities such as shadowing healthcare professionals and learn how to suture using an orange peel. Even though medical school felt like a distant dream to me back then, these programs helped me to envision myself in the field that I one day hoped to pursue.



Over ten years later, the PRIME-US program at UCSF has brought everything full circle for me and ignited an interest in pipeline programs once again- this time, I have a new perspective as a medical student. I was particularly moved by a PRIME

seminar where we traveled to Fresno State University and spoke to students in the Health Career Opportunities Program (HCOP). I saw myself in the students' eyes- their eagerness and passion for medicine and healthcare for the underserved felt strikingly familiar to my own. By sharing my story, I hoped to inspire them to achieve their own dreams, no matter how much work it may take. After one student panel where we shared our individual paths to medical school, several students thanked us afterwards, exchanged email addresses with us, and expressed their appreciation for hearing from someone to whom they could relate.

This past summer, I worked with two different pipeline programs to coordinate site visits to UCSF. The San Francisco State University Summer Science Institute and the Mentors in Medicine and Science Program brought their participants to UCSF to see the campus and speak with UCSF PRIME students. We also gave them a tour of campus and had an interactive session with anatomy and pathology specimens to give the students a hands-on feel for what we have learned in medical school. These students already had a budding interest in medicine and healthcare, but I hope that speaking with medical students and visiting UCSF helped to nurture that interest and to empower them to know that, if we could reach our goals, so could they.

It has meant a lot to me to participate in the PRIME-US program and to envision various ways to give back to different communities. My work with pipeline programs has inspired me to continue striving towards increasing diversity in the healthcare field, because I believe that no one should ever be told that their dreams are impossible.