

# 2025

# Research Revolutionaries Workshops: Student Feedback & Outcomes

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Purpose

The Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute (SC CTSI) seeks to inspire local community members to pursue careers in clinical and translational research (CTR) and address growing staffing needs. In collaboration with the USC Science Technology and Research (STAR) Program, SC CTSI conducted **seven** workshops with **41** students from Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School to introduce them to CTR career pathways. Students formed **11** groups to develop and present mock grant proposals demonstrating their understanding of CTR, and completed an **eight-question** feedback survey. This document includes a visual abstract summarizing survey responses, student feedback and workshop outcomes.

## What Worked Well

- Expanded the duration of the series, based on previous feedback, from **5** to **7** workshop sessions
- Proposal presentations provided an additional peer learning opportunity
- Built in time with career panelists for 1:1 discussions and proposal feedback



**97%** Agreed they gained something that will **influence their future career goals**.



**92%** Agreed they learned something that **they can use**.



**85%** Agreed they would **recommend** this workshop to others.

## Suggested Improvements

- Create an opportunity to leave the classroom and learn in real world settings
- Make the sessions more interactive and utilize more group work opportunities
- More time for Q&A after each session with the presenter



**“My main takeaway from these workshops was learning about the different steps and the process in creating a research proposal and carrying it out. I also learned how to be more professional, and I was able to get a good idea on the different pathways I can take for what I can possibly do in the science/medical field in the future.” -Workshop Attendee**

# WORKSHOP 1 & 3:

## CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH BASICS

November 3 & 5, 2025

### What Worked Well

- Adding a second session to cover more content with additional time for discussion and questions throughout
- Highlighting the importance of teamwork and effective communication to come up with innovative ideas
- Reviewing the extensive preparation, ethical considerations, and multiple steps in CTR

**“My main takeaway from this workshop is the importance of innovation in science. In science, specifically biomedical science, researchers cannot stop and should keep continuing to try and find new ways or even improve upon the current ways.”**

**-Workshop Attendee**

### Suggested Improvements

- More interactive activities to apply understanding (e.g., real-world scenarios and studies)
- Small group or 1-on-1 activities to break up the presentation style
- Slow down the pace a bit more or provide additional time at the end for 1-on-1 questions with the presenters

#### Facilitators:



**Elizabeth Burner, MD,  
MPH, PhD**  
Director of MCD-CTS/KL2  
Training Program



**Nhu Tran, PhD, RN,  
CCRN, CCRP**  
Assistant Professor of  
Clinical Pediatrics, KSOM



# WORKSHOP 2: CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS

November 4, 2025

Facilitator:



**Sabrina Derrington, MD,  
MA, HEC-C**  
SC CTSI Director of  
Research Ethics

## What Worked Well

- Learning about how integral ethical considerations and obligations are at all stages of research
- Insights into identifying trustworthy research and the contribution to advancing healthcare solutions

**“I learned that ethics is very important. Even if results seem wrong or bad, it is good to be honest as it can affect others.”  
-Workshop Attendee**



## Suggested Improvements

- More interactive activities like partner or small group discussions
- Ways to engage or ask questions other than speaking in front of the class, for those less comfortable asking questions in a group setting (i.e. using polls or surveys)



# WORKSHOP 4: PROFESSIONALISM WORKSHOP

November 6, 2025

Facilitators:

## What Worked Well

- Highlighting the importance of preparation, organization, and sharing clear, relevant stories during interviews
- Conducting an interactive mock interview activity

**“The interview tips were highly informative as I was able to learn the importance of being specific instead of being general in my answers.”**

**- Workshop Attendee**



**Ari Padilla, MBA**  
Program Manager, Clinical  
Research Support



**Denise De Los Santos,  
BA**  
Patient Recruitment and  
Navigation Specialist

## Suggested Improvements

- More time for the presentation and mock interview activity
- Include sessions on how to navigate and access resources, connections, and opportunities in professional fields



# WORKSHOP 5: PROPOSAL PITCH DAY

November 7 & 19, 2025

## Student Proposals

- 11 groups developed a one-minute pitch to present for feedback
- Students submitted proposals to their teacher and the SC CTSI Review committee
- Each submission was reviewed and scored by three CTR professionals
- SC CTSI selected the 3 top proposals per class to do an oral presentation for live feedback in a follow up workshop
- Top presentation for each class was awarded a certificate

**“My main takeaway from these workshops was how to gain the skill of being professional during an interview as well as how to write a grant proposal which I think is extremely important and useful for the future.**

**- Workshop Attendee**

## Suggested Improvements

- Starting the group work for the mock grant proposals sooner in the workshop series would allow for more time to prepare their idea and get feedback

## Facilitators:



**Allison Zumberge  
Orechwa, PhD, MBA**  
Senior Director of  
Strategy and Innovation



**Tamara Simon, MD,  
MSPH, FAAP**  
CHLA Site Principal  
Investigator and Director,  
Workforce Development

## Sample of Proposal Topics

- Early detection of colorectal cancer using machine learning and AI-based screening
- Impact of night time phone use on sleep
- Art Therapy for Pediatric Patients with Anxiety, Pain, and Discomfort
- High Frequency Sound Waves As An Intervention for Liver Cancer Cells
- CPAP Machines for Pediatric Asthma
- Regenerative Nanogel and Nerve Stimulation for Diabetic Neuropathy



# WORKSHOP 6: CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH CAREERS

November 10, 2025

## What worked well

- Highlighting that there are many pathways to a variety of career in CTR
- Changing the career panel to a longer time slot (1.5 hours during after school session) to accommodate more interaction after the presentations

**“My main takeaway from these workshops is that no matter where you come from, there can always be a career for you in clinical science if you try your best to work towards your goal.”**

**- Workshop Attendee**

## Suggested Improvements

- Shorten presentations to allow for additional time for Q&A or 1-on-1 discussions
- Allocate more time to get feedback from the career panelists on mock proposal ideas
- Host career panel on USC campus

### Facilitator:



**Ari Padilla, MBA**  
Program Manager, Clinical  
Research Support

### Guest Speakers:



**James Finley, PhD**  
Associate Professor



**Yaneth L. Rodriguez,  
MPH**  
Project manager for  
several research studies  
at USC



**Daniel Soto, MPH**  
Assistant Professor Of  
Clinical Population and  
Public Health Sciences



**Taylor Wilson  
Burkholder, MD, MPH**  
Associate Professor of  
Clinical Emergency  
Medicine



# NEXT STEPS

Based on these key findings, the following steps are recommended to further improve the effectiveness of the workshops in addressing the lack of career pathways and development opportunities in CTR:

1. **Interactivity** and engagement throughout the entire session, such as more hands-on activities, clinical trial scenarios and Q&A opportunities.
2. More **detailed analysis** to examine differences between workshops.
3. Identification of **best practices** when facilitating workshops with high school students.
4. Identification of **new workshop topics** and **career-based activities**.

## Suggestions for Future Workshops

- Additional career paths including Biotechnology
- Additional professionalism topics like leadership and management



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