The Brody School of Medicine offers four distinction tracks related to the core missions of the school: Health System Leadership and Transformation, Medical Education and Teaching, Research and Service-Learning.

The distinction tracks provide a mechanism to formally recognize the exceptional accomplishments of medical students, while allowing the students to independently pursue areas of interest that inspired them to pursue a career in medicine. Mentors work closely with students throughout the rigorous, longitudinal three-year experience, guiding and evaluating their progress throughout.
HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND LEADERSHIP
Track Leaders: Timothy Reeder, MD, MPH and Suzanne Lazorick, MD, MPH

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
Summer Immersion:
The eight-week summer immersion program used a variety of instructional techniques to educate on health systems science topics. Students spent about 15 hours/week for in-class didactics, activities and experiences and the remainder of the 25 hours/week on outside experiential activities, independent study, project work and group activities. The students participated in small group discussion, debate, written reports and small and large group presentations.

M2 (2020 Cohort):
The curriculum included several small group sessions with readings, small group activities and presentations. The students continued to participate in a mentored quality improvement activity. The COVID pandemic prevented some of the in-person sessions and these were converted to virtual. Other experiential activities included mentor meetings, quality meetings, IHI chapter meetings and other activities including QI Symposium and Distinction Day.

M3 (2019 Cohort):
The curriculum included small group sessions with readings, small group activities and presentations. The students continued participation in a mentored quality improvement activity. Some of the in-person sessions and these were converted to virtual. Other experiential activities included mentor meetings, quality meetings, clerkship activities, Medical Education Day and Medical Student Research Day.

M4 (2018 Cohort):
The longitudinal curriculum continued to build and enhance the foundational material, culminating in a Capstone experience. The focus of this curriculum for this year was to complete the quality improvement project, prepare a presentation and manuscript suitable for publication. Students had a two-week elective with their mentor with time for project work and manuscript preparation. The students also participated in a two-week Capstone rotation.

OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
This year, we graduated the fourth cohort of scholars, who successfully established a strong foundation for ongoing program development. We have developed checklists and meeting content for each year, which has enabled program leadership to ensure the expansion of the curriculum and educational development. An important evolution of the program has been to develop a leadership curriculum for all Distinction Tracks, improving the experience.

SCHOLARSHIP:
• 18 presentations/abstracts at the local, regional and national levels

THE YEAR AHEAD:
We plan to more fully document the educational objectives for the program and align with the curriculum for each program year, complete the qualitative manuscript related to LINC summer immersion and complete another summer immersion. We have revised the M4 curriculum to focus on manuscript writing for publication.
MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TEACHING
Track Leaders: Kacie Lord, MAEd and Luan Lawson, MD, MAEd

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
Summer Immersion:
• 10 MET Scholars completed a Summer Immersion Teaching Experience (SITE) through the Allied Health Gross Anatomy course. This course was delivered virtually due to COVID-19, and students acted as Teaching Assistants throughout the online course, refining their curricular design and deployment, assessment design and evaluation, and peer-peer tutoring and feedback skills.
• Scholars completed two online Adult Education courses: ADED 7580 and 6491. Scholars logged 500+ hours collectively tied to online coursework.
• Scholars participated in small-group discussion sessions focused on adult learning theory, effective teaching strategies and medical education research planning. Research planning involved completing IRB online training and RefWorks training, and preliminary literature searches. Scholars reflected on their teaching experiences through an open essay.

M2 (2020 Cohort):
• Scholars secured an educational research mentor in an area of interest, and worked to develop a unique IRB-approved, hypothesis-driven Medical Education Research Project (MERP), designed to fill a curricular gap in either basic science or clerkship curricula. Progress was mapped quarterly. Scholars engaged in small group meetings throughout the M2 year focused on further developing their understanding of adult education and the role of educators in academic medicine, and strengthening their knowledge of instructional tools.

M3 (2019 Cohort):
• MERP data collection and analysis continued, and scholars prepared preliminary results for presentations locally, regionally and/or nationally. Scholars engaged in small group meetings focused on expanding their understanding of LCME accreditation requirements and emerging trends and innovative methods for clinical instruction.

M4 (2018 Cohort):
• Scholars began to prepare final MERP results for presentations at Distinction Day and manuscript submission, finalized teaching portfolio elements prior to residency interviews and completed a Capstone Course. Select scholars completed online Adult Education coursework.

OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
• Redesigned the Summer Immersion Program, Capstone Course and longitudinal track curriculum to better support the overall goals of the MET track and distinction track program.

THE YEAR AHEAD:
• A revised curriculum has been established for the SITE students, spring capstone course, and longitudinal track curriculum. New programs will undergo continuous reassessment.
RESEARCH
Track Leaders: Kori Brewer, PhD and David Collier, MD, PhD

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Summer Immersion:
• 30 rising M2 students participated in the 2020 Summer Scholars Research Program, which was altered to comply with COVID-19 restrictions in place over the summer. Weekly didactic sessions were held virtually. Most planned research projects were modified to allow for students to complete the work remotely through data extraction from patient records or literature-based research. Students reported significant improvement in self-perceived research skills as measured by a pre- and post-program self-assessment. A session on promoting research using social media platforms was incorporated to allow for a virtual scholarship day at the end of the summer. The 2020 Medical Student Scholarship Day transitioned to a week-long event during which students posted quick-shot presentations of their project and received real-time feedback. Fourteen students applied to the Research Distinction Track, and 10 were selected based on a written proposal and their research day poster presentations.

M2 (2020 Cohort):
• Ten RDT students met virtually five times during their M2 year and received both informal and formal didactic presentations on topics, including an in-depth review of objectives and expectations of the RDT program, oral presentation of research proposals, how to incorporate research into a clinical career and applying SWOT analysis to research design. Students also participated in one all-track leadership session.

M3 (2019 Cohort):
• Ten RDT students in the M3 cohort met virtually five times for both informal and formal didactic presentations on topics, such as Post-Step 1 reengagement in research, identifying journals for publishing, writing specific aims and finding sources of funding, identifying journals for publication and interpreting systematic literature reviews. Each student submitted quarterly reports of their progress and participated in one all-track leadership session.

M4 (2018 Cohort):
• Nine M4 students remained in the RDT for the graduating cohort. Students participated in a Capstone course where they participated in large-group leadership sessions and completed program deliverables including a graphical abstract of their project, a final manuscript and a mock grant proposal. Each completed a Capstone project and presented at Distinction Day.

SCHOLARSHIP:
31 accepted student abstracts/presentations; 10 manuscripts published; three non-scholarly communication (news stories)

THE YEAR AHEAD:
Track leadership will be assumed by Dr. Johanna Hannan. Some of the scheduled didactic sessions will be shifted as follows: M2s will focus on increasing their knowledge base of how to design, perform and manage research projects and present their results; M3s will heavily focus on writing and publishing their manuscript; M4s will focus on research in clinical careers, applying for funding, IRB applications and their Capstone deliverables.
SERVICE LEARNING
Track Leader: Jennifer Crotty, MD

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
Summer Immersion: Five students were selected to participate in the Service-Learning Distinction Track Summer Immersion program. The program was eight weeks long and consisted of both virtual didactic and experiential learning activities. Didactic activities focused on learning the fundamental principles of community engagement. Much of the content was taught by Dr. Ari Mwachofi from the Department of Public Health and Dr. Crotty. Each student was paired with a community partner organization to begin developing a longitudinal project. The community partners were EkiM for change, AccessEast, PhysioCamp, Building Hope and the Greenville Community Shelter. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in person volunteering was not required, but all students completed an average of 57 hours of community service over the summer in a variety of ways.

M2 (2020 Cohort): Throughout their M2 year, students remained involved with their community sites. They planned a food drive and collected >500lbs of food for the Brody/VMC Medical Food Pantry in November 2020. They met multiple times throughout the year and read/taught each other about “The Doctor’s Dozen,” a wellness book written by a family physician.

M3 (2019 Cohort): Throughout their M3 year, the students met every 6 weeks to cover a lecture series on Social Determinants of Health including food insecurity, education, built environment, employment and transportation.

M4 (2021 Cohort): Individual activities to learn and prepare for delivering the Capstone Project.

SCHOLARSHIP:
• More than 10 student presentations/publications at the local, state, and national level
• All M2 SLDT students presented at The Medical Student Scholarship Forum in August 2020 and all M4 students presented at the Distinction Day

OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
• All graduating students matched into their specialties of choice.
• Five M2 students, one M3, one M4 and Dr. Crotty were inducted into ECU’s Servire Society.
• The M3 class created a form and database to collect and share community resources to address SDoH and presented this at the transition to M4 session.
• The M4s conducted several service-sessions, made 30 blankets to donate to the VMC children’s hospital, led a Greenway Cleanup, Ronald McDonald service day and an Autism Center volunteer activity.
• Four M4s completed their ERHD graduate certificate.

THE YEAR AHEAD:
This summer will be a hybrid in-person/virtual delivery. Students are all allowed back in person to volunteer, and 80 hours of service will be required over their summer immersion. Epidemiology sessions, to be taught by two MD faculty who have joint appointments in pediatrics and public health, will add to the curriculum.