

Transforming Health Professions Education Research: The New Era of the HERS Program

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Introduction & Background

- The Health Professions Education Scholars (HERS) program is an innovative faculty development initiative built to cultivate skilled medical education researchers through a community of practice approach (1).
- HERS is rooted in a social constructivist framework and integrates structured instruction, mentorship, and applied research to build scholarly capacity and foster collaboration (2).
- Objective:** Revise and enhance the HERS program based on prior participant feedback to support faculty in conducting peer-reviewed, publishable educational research aligned with institutional priorities.

Methods

Participant Engagement and Individualized Support

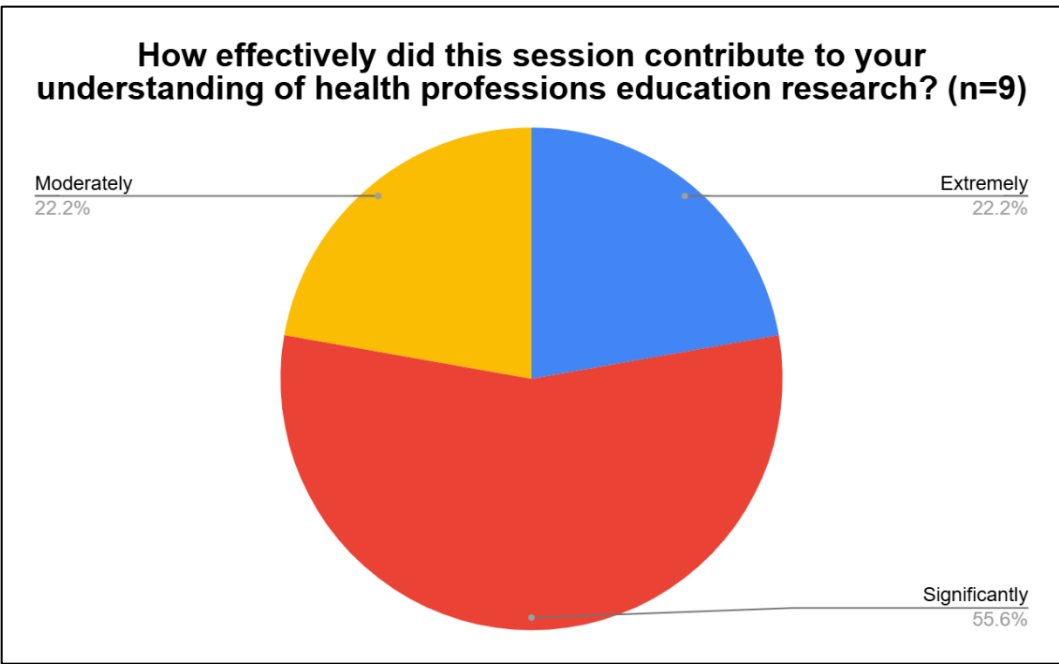
- Six participants enrolled in the current HERS cohort completed a baseline pre-assessment to identify research skills and goals.
- Each participant developed an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) tailored to their interests with structured mentorship by trained faculty mentors.
- Attendance at in-person sessions: topics covered include IRB processes, biostatistics, authorship, peer review, and scholarly dissemination.
- Independent work is completed between each in-person session with clearly outlined deliverables.

Program Structure and Milestones

- Formative “Go/No-Go” milestones were integrated throughout the program to ensure progress in key areas such as research question refinement and IRB readiness.
- The program timeline was extended from March 2025 through October 2026 to allow sufficient time for rigorous research development and dissemination.
- A post-assessment is planned to measure growth in competencies and scholarly productivity.
- Completion of the AAMC Medical Education Research Certificate (MERC) as a core component (3)

Major Components

				
IEPs	Assigned Mentor	AAMC MERC Certification	Internal Instruction/Support	Scholarly Project
Individualized Education Plans with tailored MERC sessions	Guidance from experienced mentors in the field	Education Research Certification	Bi-monthly meetings for learning/project support with local presenters	Hands-on research project for practical application



Key Findings

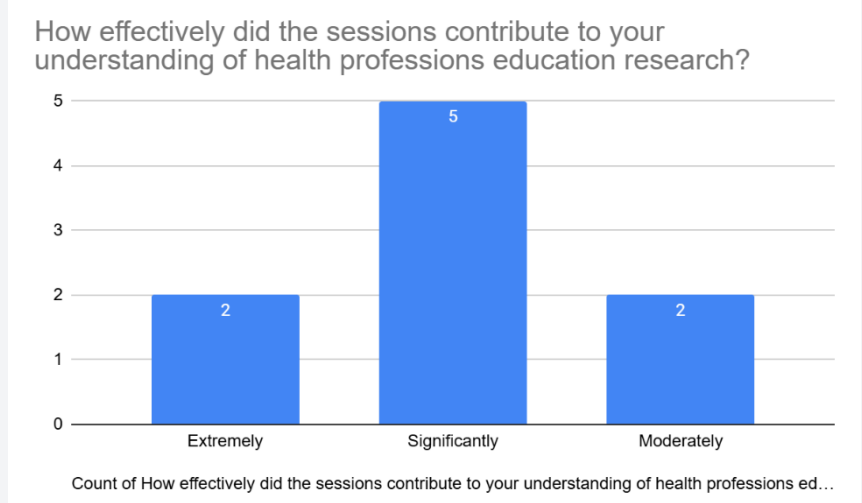
- The revised HERS program fosters a sustainable community of educator-scholars to enhance research capacity in medical education.
- The program timeline extension allows for thorough research development and dissemination.
- Iterative program improvements demonstrate a responsive, evidence-informed model for faculty development that can be replicated by other institutions.

HERS Timeline 2025-2026		
Dates	Focus Areas & Key Activities	Main Deliverables
Mar–May 2025	Program launch and orientation; MERC: Research Questions & Literature Review; Library presentation; Initial mentor meetings	Research question + Refined IEP
Jun–Aug 2025	Independent work with mentors; MERC: Measurement & Validity; Scholarship discussions	Annotated bibliography + Progress Check-in (Go/No-Go)
Sep–Nov 2025	MERC sessions continue; IRB consultation and submission; Research design and measurement tools finalized	Research Design Plan/Measurement Tools + IRB submission
Dec–Feb 2026	Biostatistics and data consultation; Authorship and peer review preparation	Progress Check-in (Go/No-Go)
Mar–May 2026	Data collection and analysis; Project presentations and feedback	Progress Check-in (Go/No-Go) + Presentation draft + project updates
Jun–Oct 2026	Continued mentor meetings; Final presentations and Education Day poster	Progress Check-in (Go/No-Go) + Final poster presentation

Results

All reported results (including pie chart and graphs) are based on cumulative session reflections collected from 4 unique sessions

- Alignment with HERS objectives: Mean rating 4.8/5
- Overall satisfaction with program: Mean rating 4.9/5



Session Reflection Themes:

- Appreciated guidance and support of refining research questions
- Identified importance of planning and structured frameworks for research projects
- Value of identifying mentors and support narrowing project scope

Discussion & Implications

- The HERS program’s integration of structured instruction, mentorship, and applied research promotes faculty growth in medical education scholarship.
- The model offers a replicable framework for institutions aiming to elevate educational research capacity.
- Future directions include the planned post-assessment to quantitatively measure competency growth and scholarly productivity.
- Overall, participants expressed high satisfaction with the sessions, valued the structured frameworks for developing research questions, and felt significantly more prepared to advance their projects.
- Primary challenges center on time and administrative barriers, suggesting that additional mentorship and protected time may further support scholarly success.

References:

1. Cruess, R. L., Cruess, S. R., & Steinert, Y. (2018). Medicine as a community of practice: implications for medical education. *Academic Medicine*, 93(2), 185-191.

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