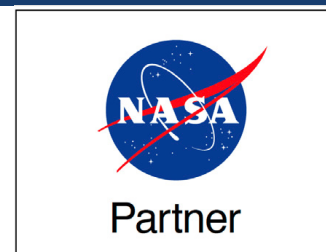


# DREAM-WSTEM

Dynamic Research Education Academy for Mentoring Womxn in STEM



Dynamic Research Education Academy for Mentoring Womxn in STEM (DREAM-WSTEM) was established at Simmons University in the fall of 2023 and is funded by NASA\_MUREP (National Aeronautics and Space Administration\_ Minority University Research and Education Project). The goal of the program is to mentor women and non-binary individuals to build confidence, formulate STEM identity, and develop successful STEM career pathways throughout their 4-year undergraduate program. We have established the first cohort and set up several goal-oriented activities to navigate students as early as their first year of college to be more proactive while seeking STEM career opportunities. An inquiry-based interdisciplinary DREAM paid summer micro-internship opportunity has been created for the scholars to acquire the necessary skill set on 'how to be a scientist'.



# 1:1 Mentoring

Students meet regularly with their assigned DREAM mentor. Mentors help students build confidence and resilience, formulate STEM identity, improve scientific literacy and competence, and develop successful STEM career pathways at Simmons and beyond.

## Fall 2023 Workshops

### 'Meet and Greet' September 20, 2023

This was the first in-person meeting with the cohort to discuss expectations and logistics. Icebreaker activities were led by Dr. Lara Kallander, professional coach and DREAM partner.



### 'STEM Career Workshop' October 4, 2023

This was focused on what various STEM careers look like and how to think critically to develop STEM research ideas. It was led by Dr. Lara Kallander, professional coach and DREAM partner.



### 'STEM Identity Wheel Workshop' November 1, 2023

Activities focused on the 'Social and Personal Identity Wheel'. Through these interactive and reflective activities, we tried to find common ground with our peers and learn more about one another, helping DREAM scholars to build a community of learners, encourage empathy, and appreciate the diversity of identities in the classroom and beyond.

### 'Social Event' December 6, 2023

Spring events were discussed at the end of the year social where scholars engaged in several activities such as making models, pins, group dancing, and games to build a friendly community with plenty of NASA swag handed out to the students.



# Spring 2024 Workshops

## 'Writing a STEM Focused Cover Letter'

January 31, 2024

The first meeting of the semester started with an update from Dr. Saha on various STEM opportunities for students. The group brainstormed how to write a STEM-focused cover letter. The scholars reviewed responses and challenges they often encounter in writing an effective cover letter and came up with best practices.



## 'Writing a STEM Focused Resume'

February 21, 2024

Ms. Elise Vernely, Assistant Director & Career Coach for the Career Education Center, Center for Student Success, lead this workshop and gave a presentation on creating a STEM focused resume. Diverse examples of STEM focused resumes were shared and students were encouraged to point out the positives and negatives on each. Students were provided with resources from the Career Education Center.



## 'Social Media Presence'

March 20, 2024

Dr. Lara Kallander, professional coach and DREAM partner, joined us once again with a presentation on students' Social Media presence, focusing on students' LinkedIn profiles. Dr. Kallander taught best practices and shared examples and then led the students in creating, or updating, their own LinkedIn profiles during the workshop. Students were also encouraged to take headshots for their profiles at the end of the workshop.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a DREAM scholar, please reach out to Professor Saha at [arpita.saha@simmons.edu](mailto:arpita.saha@simmons.edu)

# Mentoring the Mentors

## Professional Development Activities for Mentors

### 'Sister Resister Mentoring Training for STEM Faculty'

August 22, 2023

DREAM launched this full-day workshop to cultivate culturally responsive mentorship to train students who are diverse across race, gender, nationality, sexuality, age, ability and language.



The workshop was created and led by Drs. Janie Ward & Tracy Robinson-Wood, authors of 'Sisters Registers: Mentoring Black Women on Campus'. This workshop was held in partnership with HHMI-IE3 Learning Community Cluster 2 at Simmons.

### 'Leader Identity I: Your Strength'

October 16, 2023

Ms. Michele Houston led this workshop, which gave Mentors a chance to assess and analyze their leadership strengths. They had the chance to examine the strengths and blind spots associated with their leadership style and the need to flex and change their leadership style to best fit the situation and other people's styles. This workshop was held in partnership with the Simmons Institute of Inclusive Leadership.

### 'Leader Identity II: Leading in a Gendered World'

November 13, 2023

Ms. Michele Houston also led this workshop which gave mentors the opportunity to explore work practices and norms that look gender neutral, but can have a differential impact on women. Mentors learned about and tested their own implicit associations. This workshop was held in partnership with the Simmons Institute of Inclusive Leadership.

### 'Leader Identity III: Mentorship and Sponsorship'

March 18, 2024

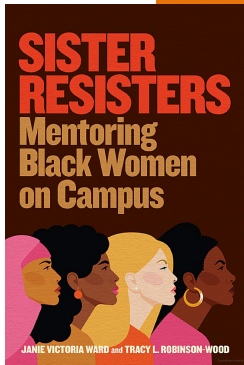
Ms. Michele Houston led this workshop on the benefits and best practices of mentorship and sponsorship. Mentors learned about the strategies and the effective toolbox on how to be a better mentor and sponsor for their DREAM scholars. This workshop was held in partnership with the Simmons Institute of Inclusive Leadership.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a DREAM mentor, please reach out to Professor Saha at [arpita.saha@simmons.edu](mailto:arpita.saha@simmons.edu)

- ▶ Dr. Arpita Saha (Director and Faculty Mentor, Professor of Chemistry and Physics)
- ▶ Dr. Donna Beers (Faculty Mentor, Professor of Mathematics)
- ▶ Dr. Megan McCarty (Assessment and Faculty Mentor, Professor of Psychology)
- ▶ Dr. Jane Lopilato (Faculty Mentor, Chair and Professor of Biology)
- ▶ Dr. Meghan Johnston (Faculty Mentor, Professor of Chemistry and Physics)

## Partnerships & Collaborations

- ▶ "Mentoring the Mentors" Collaborators:
  - Dr. Janie Ward, Ed.D. Professor Emerita, Simmons University
  - Dr. Tracy Robinson-Wood, Ed.D. Professor, DAP, Northeastern University
  - Ms. Michele Houston Assoc. Director Custom Learning Design Development, Simmons University Institute of Inclusive Leadership
- ▶ Student Workshop Collaborators:
  - Dr. Lara Kallander, Ph.D., MAAP, CPC (Founder and Principal Coach of Thriving Through Adversity Coaching)
  - Simmons Career Education Center, Center for Student Success
  - SAMs Peer Mentors from Office of Undergraduate Advising
- ▶ Partnerships:
  - Simmons HHMI-IE3-LCC2
    - Dr. Richard Gurney, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of CPD, Simmons University
  - Open Avenues Foundation
  - The Office of Undergraduate Advising
  - The Summer Undergraduate Research Program at Simmons (SURPASs)
  - Simmons Career Education Center
  - Simmons University Institute of Inclusive Leadership



## Presentations & Press

Women College Coalition (WCC) President Convening and celebrating NASA\_MUREP\_WCU award-winning at the White House on October 26, 2023

Dr. Saha represented Simmons University (on behalf of Simmons' President Lynn P. Wooten) at this event. She presented the goals, mission, and vision of the DREAM program at the White House. She also attended meetings with Deputy Secretary of Higher Education Programs Amanda Fuchs Miller, Sophia Schilling, Senior Legislative Assistant to Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-04), and Under Secretary of Defense Heidi Shyu regarding various STEM initiatives, especially garnering support for Women in STEM



### DREAM-WSTEM in the Press:

Simmons.edu:

["Simmons Receives Award from NASA to Support Women and Minority STEM Students"](#)

MassLive.com:

["NASA awards grants to Smith, Simmons to bridge STEM gender gap"](#)