

SERU/UCUES Research Symposium
A New Generation of University Students: Understanding the Student Experience and Seeking
Opportunities to Translate Analysis into Practice
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ABSTRACT

*The “Turning Point” for Minority Pre-Meds
The effect of early undergraduate experiences of minority students at
UC Berkeley and Stanford University on aspirations to enter medical school*

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Evidence from both the University of California system and from Stanford University suggests that, during their undergraduate experience, students from under-represented racial and ethnic minority groups (URM) who enter as pre-med experience a substantial decrease in interest in pursuing a career in medicine. In a typical year at Stanford, 100 URM students enter as freshmen expressing an interest in becoming a physician after graduating. Fewer than 50 will actually apply to medical school. By comparison, for every 100 white or Asian students who enter with an interest in a medical career, between 115 and 125 will apply to medical school. Over the four years of the undergraduate experience the premedical “pipeline” loses substantial numbers of URM students. In order to determine why and when this loss of interest in premedical studies occurs, we followed three cohorts of incoming Stanford students and two cohorts of incoming Berkeley students.