**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Communication training for graduate trainees and community knowledge of science and STEM related careers are lacking. We propose to create a bridge between graduate education and the community through K-12 teachers.

**Aims:**
1. Improve trainee communication skills.
2. Establish and sustain collaborative networks between graduate trainees and K-12 teachers, and
3. Increase community knowledge of science careers.

The Voelcker Biosciences Teacher Academy (VBTA) is a grant-funded, teacher-led network of K-12 science teachers who strive to improve math, science, and health education through collaboration with colleagues across grade levels, disciplines, and district borders. Located at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), the VBTA provides teacher professional development (TPD) featuring scientists and educational researchers from area universities and institutes. Teacher feedback has led the VBTA to create new programs to support area Science Nights and local school Career Days. Currently, the VBTA has a community of nearly 500 K-12 teachers from Central and South Texas.

The Office of Career Development (OCD) provides comprehensive career and professional development programming to graduate trainees at the UTHSCSA. The OCD accomplishes the mission through the implementation of workshops, creating networking opportunities, and offering outreach programs for trainees. Additional services include one-on-one meetings to discuss resume and CV preparation, mock interviews, and providing information about both academia and non-academia careers.

**Joining Forces to Meet Program Goals**

**OCD Graduate Trainee Goals**
- Increase communication training
- Increase community engagement opportunities
- Diversity and strengthen CV

**VBTA K-12 Teacher Goals**
- Increase community science knowledge
- Increase student knowledge of STEM related careers
- Increase teacher content knowledge

**Collaborative Programs: Science Nights & Career Days**

**OCD HIGHLIGHT**
- Diversify CV
- Strengthen presentation and pedagogy skills
- Increase student opportunities to communicate their research
- Increase exposure to current science research

**VBTA HIGHLIGHT**
- Increase opportunities to communicate research to diverse audiences
- Serve as science ambassadors to K-12 students
- Expand their knowledge of pedagogical techniques
- Establish connections within the K-12 community

**K-12 TEACHERS**
- Deepen their own science content knowledge
- Obtain insight into current scientific research
- Update existing lessons to reflect current science
- Expand knowledge of STEM career options for K-12 students
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**Teacher Professional Development Workshops**
- C3 Workshop (Coffee, Collegiality, & Collaboration): 3 hour workshop for K-12 teachers
- VBTA Annual Spring Conference: offers 30+ one-hour workshops for K-12 teachers

**Fall 2013 – Fall 2016**

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**Sample C3 Workshop Graduate Trainee Sample Topics**
- Ebola virus: The biology, epidemiology, and sociology
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**Science Nights (Fall 2014 – Fall 2015)**

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**Outcomes of Collaborative Community Engagement**
- Graduate Trainees
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  - Strengthen presentation and pedagogy skills
  - Diversity CV
- K-12 Teachers
  - Deepen science content knowledge
  - Provide connections between classroom science and real-world applications
  - Expand knowledge of STEM and bioscience career options for K-12 students
- Community (K-12 students and parents)
  - Increase exposure to current science research
  - Explore a variety of STEM and bioscience career paths

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