TITLE A Medical Student Leadership Course Led to Teamwork, Advocacy, and Mindfulness

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to describe the UCLA-PRIME program which aims to prepare medical students to work among vulnerable groups and share lessons with those seeking to foster leadership, advocacy, and resiliency in our future physician workforce.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty students participated in the July 2011 UCLA Program in Medical Education (PRIME) that seeks to increase the number of physicians, advocates, and leaders in medically underserved communities. Since its inception in 2007, the program has begun with a three-week leadership course before the first year of medical school. The curriculum emphasizes five relationship-centered leadership competencies: leadership, advocacy, teamwork, mindfulness, and self-care. These derive from the premise that a student's capacity for leadership and resilience stems from the intrapersonal relationship one has with one- self; interpersonal relationships; and relationships within organizations that build partnership, respect, and change capacity. Four methods were used to assess outcomes: the completed community service project, the Leadership Practices Inventory, the Relational Coordination Scale (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998), and the Baer Mindfulness Scale (Baer, Smith, Lykins, et al., 2008).

KEY FINDINGS

LPI scores did not significantly change during the course; although scores did improve on the RCS, indicating that team members communicated and related to each other effectively, and on the Mindfulness scale. The author's suggest: "We found no changes in leadership practices. Perhaps students ranked themselves more critically at the end of the course, after they had a greater understanding of these practices, than at the beginning. It is also likely that 3 weeks is not enough time to learn and improve these skills" (p. 460).