

C-AIM Career Development Program: Preparing Graduate Students and Post-Docs for Career Success

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Most PhD graduates pursue careers outside of academia. While these graduates bring important skills to their jobs, such as the ability to analyze problems and critical thinking, employers have noted the absence of some essential professional skills such as team management, effective communication with diverse audiences, effective mentorship, and time management. Indeed, these skills are valuable for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows whether they pursue academic or non-academic careers. There are few opportunities for early career researchers to gain many of these skills, however.

RI C-AIM will address this gap through the creation of a new Career Development Program, led by the University of Rhode Island's Metcalf Institute in collaboration with C-AIM partner institutions. The Career Development Program (CDP) will provide a suite of training programs and learning experiences designed to build career readiness among C-AIM participants. The CDP's primary audience will be graduate students and post-docs, but C-AIM faculty and staff, as well as advanced undergraduates from all eight C-AIM partner institutions, also will be able to participate in CDP programs.

Participants can opt to pursue a Certificate in Career Development by attending specific required programs and additional electives. The certificate requirements are intended to address topics and skills that are generally absent from formal degree programs but are increasingly necessary for professional success in STEM fields. An online opportunities catalog will list existing career development opportunities at all C-AIM partner institutions as well as new offerings developed by Metcalf Institute. Participants may attend programs from the catalog for points toward CDP certification.

Metcalf Institute will conduct programmatic and longitudinal surveys to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of the CDP. This program will amplify C-AIM's workforce development efforts while building new collaborations between C-AIM partner institutions. Most importantly, the CDP will prepare C-AIM participants for successful careers.