

Promoting Psychological Research and Training on Health Disparities Issues at Ethnic Minority Serving Institutions Grants (ProDIGs) Program Evaluation: Overview

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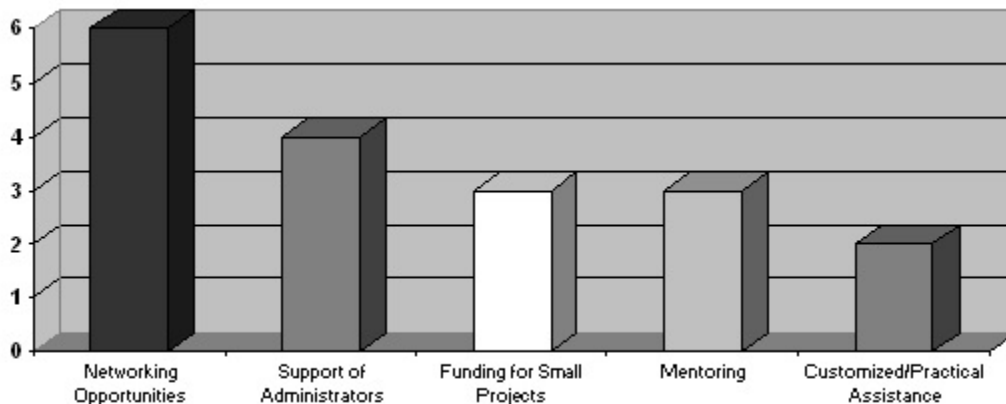
The ProDIGs program seeks to increase the capacity of ethnic minority serving institutions and faculty to engage in health disparities research. ProDIGs offers small grants and professional development activities to early career faculty to support initial research or program/curriculum development activities associated with preparation of an application for federal or foundation funding.

The ProDIGs Program Evaluation survey was developed to gauge the effectiveness of the program. The survey asked about the grantees' satisfaction with various aspects of their experience and their perceptions of its success and usefulness. The survey was mailed electronically to each of the 11 past awardees. The following results are based on the responses received from the 10 respondents.

One question inquired as to the grantee's overall satisfaction with the ProDIGs grant program. Based on their responses, all of the grantees had a positive experience with the program. Out of ten respondents, three were "satisfied" and seven were "very satisfied."

When asked about the specific strengths of the program, grantees most frequently referred to the opportunities for networking with other faculty, and representatives from professional and funding organizations. Respondents also noted the assistance, support and feedback they received from the program administrators as a major strength. Other responses included the rare opportunity for funding of smaller projects, the mentoring component, and the practical assistance they received which was customized to their specific project and interests.

Figure 1. Major Strengths of the ProDIGs Program.



Responses regarding shortcomings of the program also varied. Grantees noted the limits placed on their study by the small amount of the funding, and the brevity and limited structure in the mentoring relationship. Other responses included the inability to network

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with previous or subsequent ProDIGs grant recipients, an overemphasis on federal funding sources, and the brevity of the funding period.

Now in its fifth year, the ProDIGs grant program appears to be providing its participants with a much appreciated opportunity to develop research grant writing skills and funding networks. One grantee described the program as “a crucial stepping stone in helping me to establish my research area.” OEMA looks forward to continuing this effort to improve minority health and treatment by promoting greater involvement of ethnic minority students, faculty and institutions in the research endeavor.