BLUFORD HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: Increasing Diversity in Healthcare Leadership with the *Be the Change: Careers in Health* Course
BHLI: Increasing Diversity in Healthcare Leadership with the Be the Change: Careers in Health Course

The Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI) wanted to extend their professional development offerings to high school students. BHLI partnered with WGU Labs (Labs) to create a 16-week healthcare leadership career pathways course to address BHLI’s learning and organizational goals.

How do you help students start seeing themselves as leaders earlier in their academic careers?

In late 2020, BHLI asked themselves this question. Since 2013, BHLI has offered a professional development program to college students focused on preparing emerging leaders from underrepresented groups for healthcare leadership roles. Now, they wanted to develop a high school program to reach students as they were beginning to think about their future careers.

Tapping into High Schoolers’ needs

BHLI needed their High School Academy to

- provide positive role models of healthcare leaders who share similar racial and ethnic backgrounds or experiences as the students.
- build enthusiasm and illuminate a path for students to pursue leadership roles that match their interests and passions.
- develop professional leadership skills through real-world, practical application.
- encourage students to keep up the momentum gained during this program, and one day continue their career exploration in the BHLI collegiate program.

BHLI had two partner schools willing to pilot the initial program, but eventually wanted to scale the program to schools across the country. Besides Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), they had limited internal and technological resources to design the high-quality learning experience they envisioned.
Creating a Health Career Pathways Course

BHLI partnered with WGU Labs Learning Experience Designers and content creators to develop the Be the Change: Careers in Health Course.

**BLENDED LEARNING**

Utilizing a blended learning approach, BHLI and Labs decided to combine online and in-person learning. This approach would fulfill BHLI’s need for in-person engagement with guest speakers and foster collaboration between students when they could not meet in the same classroom.

**USER-CENTERED DESIGN**

To ensure course content aligned with BHLI’s goals for student learning and high-quality content, the BHLI and Labs teams engaged in a User-Centered Design process. Labs designers tested the content with students, course facilitators, and BHLI Leadership. Then, content creators used this feedback to refine and iterate until it met BHLI’s branding and professional standards.

**FLEXIBLE COURSE DELIVERY**

At BHLI’s request, the Labs team selected technological options that could meet BHLI’s goals for eventually scaling the content to other schools. Labs designers selected adaptable, user-friendly technology platforms, and modes of delivery that could fit into different learning environments. Also, blended learning offered flexibility—course delivery could be fully online or fully in-person, given the needs of future schools.

**COURSE EXPERIENCE**

- **Expert and Alumni Guest Speakers.** Allows students to interact, ask questions, and build connections with diverse healthcare leaders
- **In-class learning games and role plays.** Expose students to some of the typical interactions they can expect within a given career
- **Independent assignments.** Demonstrate the day-to-day tasks of a given career, with a specific emphasis on developing the leadership skills needed for that career
- **Career Infographics.** Provide data surrounding particular career fields – typical salary ranges, education requirements, job outlook, and more.
- **Course Reflection Journal.** Offers self reflection and mindful consideration of the career pathway that could be the right fit for each student.
- **Capstone Presentation and Networking Event.** Offers students an opportunity to synthesize and share what they learned, while working on their professional and networking skills.

Watch [introductory course video](#)
INITIAL SUCCESS AND UPCOMING PROGRAM ANALYSIS

The first cohort of the Be the Change: Careers in Health Course launches fall 2021.

Initial Success

BHLI held a meeting for prospective students and their parents where they highlighted the course introductory video Labs created. As a result of this meeting:

• Course enrollment is now at full capacity (20 students)
• School officials recognize the value of the course
• Students will receive high school and college credit for the course
• Students and parents are excited to engage with the course

Upcoming Program Analysis

BHLI collaborated with the Labs team to design two forms of program analysis that they will use to report on success metrics as the course progresses.

• Pre- and Post-surveys: evaluate mindset shifts in students’ attitudes about potential leadership roles they can pursue in healthcare
• Course Journal Submissions: continuous assessment to evaluate course engagement and learning

“The collaborative effort has been enjoyable, and we know that our high school students, facilitators, and BHLI Board will be impressed with the quality programing, curriculum, and preparation that has gone into creating a successful health career pathways program.”
—John W. Bluford, President and Founder of BHLI

“I’m so impressed with how well the Labs team has understood our goal and our vision for this project, and I appreciate their dedication to helping us build a quality program for our high school students.”
—Candice Brooks, BHLI Director

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