

# Broadening Participation in National REU Programs through URG Application Support

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The Brandeis MRSEC is committed to broadening participation of underrepresented groups (URGs) in materials research. This year, Olivier-Mason, with the SciComm peer mentors, piloted an outreach initiative with Fisher College, a small college in Boston with a large population of students from underrepresented groups. The goal was to enhance awareness of and preparation for the nation-wide NSF-REU program. Many students from URGs are unaware of the potential of this opportunity, and lack the skills needed to write a successful application. They may be too busy working while studying, or have inadequate mentorship to complete the lengthy and arduous application process.

In the pilot at Fisher College, there were two outcomes: 1) sixty undergraduates attended a one-hour long workshop open to all students interested in any REU program across the nation. 2) Six students met one-on-one with three SciComm Lab peer mentors for individual REU application coaching.

Next, we will scale-up this pilot to increase URM participation in REUs. Notably, this is a relatively low-cost initiative that could have a profound impact on national REU demographics if scaled.



**Sixty undergraduates participated in a SciComm Lab facilitated workshop designed to increase awareness of the REU program and encourage students to apply.**