

Promise AGEP: Maryland Transformation
Social Science Studies Overview
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Research Questions and Methods

The research questions that guide the Maryland Promise AGEP social science studies are:

How do graduate student experiences of: (a) micro-affirmations/micro-aggressions; (b) a sense of belonging; (c) professional networks; and (d) the nature of the faculty-student mentoring experiences influence doctoral student outcomes (e.g., time to degree, persistence, job placement, sense of agency in career advancement)? How do student demographics, discipline, institutional type, and participation in the USM Promise AGEP shape student experiences?

We have designed three studies to explore these research questions.

Study One: In-Depth Case Studies of Three Promise Programs

We will conduct in-depth case studies of three time-intensive Promise programs: Dissertation House, Summer Success Institute, and Professors in Training. Each case study will include participant observation, content analysis of program materials, evaluation materials collected by the internal evaluation team, focus groups with participants, and comparison of participant student outcomes with a cohort of nonparticipants.

Study Two: Mentoring Graduate Students of Color in Science

This study focuses on six faculty-student pairs at each of the 11 participating institutions. Thus, we will work with 66 pairs, for a total of 132 student and faculty participants. Each pair will be treated as a case, and three forms of data will be collected from each pair: 1) audio-recorded meetings, 2) individual interviews, and 3) interviews of Promise AGEP staff.

Study Three: Survey of STEM Doctoral Students on Five Promise Campuses

To understand the relationships between important variables and key graduate student outcomes, we will conduct a cross-sectional survey of graduate students from six disciplines in five Promise AGEP institutions. We will design survey constructs relevant to our conceptual framework.

Reporting and Research Dissemination

In addition to annual funding agency reports to National Science Foundation, the research team will report periodically on Promise AGEP program outcomes to stakeholders at the university and system levels. Our dissemination plan also includes submitting article manuscripts to high impact, peer-reviewed journals (e.g., the American Journal of Community Psychology, Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of Higher Education, and the Journal of Engineering Education, and others).