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## CAPS - Background

- ECST Undergraduate demographics
- ECST Graduation rates
- In addition to financial disadvantage, many students – including those who are academically talented - have inadequate preparation for the increased rigors of college education from their K-12 education and limited family guidance due to the fact that most students are first generation college students.

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## Program Objective

- ❖ Supports 2 cohorts of scholars from their sophomore to senior years.
- ❖ Using the holistic supporting pathway, the project targets to have
  - ❖ 90% of scholars persist
  - ❖ 50% graduate within 5 years and
  - ❖ an additional 40% graduate within 6 years
 in engineering or computer science majors.

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## Recruitment

CAPS Cohorts Demographics									
Cohort No.	Major	Number of Scholars (Recruited)				Number of Scholars (Retained as of Fall 2019)			
		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		URM	Non-URM	URM	Non-URM	URM	Non-URM	URM	Non-URM
1	Civil Engineering				2				1
	Computer Science		2		1	2		1	2
	Electrical Engineering		2				1		
	Mechanical Engineering	1	1		1			1	1
	SubTotal	5	1	1	5	2		1	4
2	Civil Engineering		3				3		
	Computer Science		4		1				1
	Electrical Engineering		4		1				1
	Mechanical Engineering		2		1				1
	SubTotal	13		3		13			3
SubTotal		18	1	4	5	15	1	4	4
Total					28				24

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## Structured Recruitment Process

- Diversified advertisement via multiple channels - a scholarship information session, flyers, emails, college Kiosk TV, college webpages, e-newsletters, student organizations, and announcements in classrooms.
- Active recruitment from the ECST First-Year Experience program (FYrE)
- Online applications
- Application Reviews & Interviews by the Selection Committee

### Improved Recruitment Strategy in Year 2

- Scholar and student involvement
- Faculty mentors involvement
- Increased number of announcements

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## Three Integrated Interventions & CAPS Support Activities

**Mentor+**, encourages students to see their academic work in relation to their families and communities

**Peer cohorts**, providing social support structure for students and enhancing their sense of belongings in classrooms and beyond

**Professional development with difference-education**, giving students support in situations where they practice reconciling how to navigate a world where others may have a different cultural script

Mentor+ Advisement Meetings

Sophomore Learning Cluster

Cohort Gatherings  
By major  
By cohort year

Field Trips  
Seminars (reflection essay)  
Professional Conference

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## Implementations and Improvements

Mentor+	Peer Support	Professional development	Orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory Mentor+ advisement session (at least twice per term)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifted from mentor initiated to scholar initiated scheduling</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mentor Training (once per semester)</li> <li>• Summer18 – Growth mindset</li> <li>• Fall18-Guide to one-on-one meeting</li> <li>• Spring19-Leadership</li> <li>• Fall19-various aspects of intersectionality</li> <li>• Spring20-Growthmindset (online training)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal cohort gatherings by year and cohort</li> <li>• Peer gathering and mentoring by major                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated by rotating peer leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Same course enrollment (extremely difficult during their first two years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory participation in one of professional events per term followed by a submission of a reflection essay</li> <li>• Research opportunities and internships</li> <li>• Professional conference</li> <li>• Field trips (once or twice per year)</li> <li>• Mentor initiated professional development</li> <li>• Peer initiated professional development activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before each Fall semester</li> <li>• Introduction of the program</li> <li>• Icebreaking activities</li> <li>• Year 2 - orientation content to include new relationship building activities and clarification of the program expectations</li> </ul>

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### CAPS Research

**Investigates**

- how these interventions affect the development of social belonging and engineering identity of CAPS scholars
- the impact of Mentor+ on academic resilience and progress to degree.

Both qualitative and quantitative data collections from:

- Focus group meetings (every semester)
- An online survey after completion of each project year
- Mentor+ meetings
- Academic records

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### Results / Evaluation (1)

- Scholars report a high level of satisfaction with the program and report financial and academic benefits. Faculty also report satisfaction with their participation.
- Scholars reported excellent relationships with mentors, universally agreeing that CAPS mentors were helpful.
- Suggested improvements by both mentors and scholars – more professional development workshops and social events that include both cohorts of scholars.

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### Results / Evaluation (2)

*(R.1a) What are students' perceptions of the obstacles they face and the resources available to them?*

- Time management as their greatest challenge
- Scholars reported a wide variety of resources used to address these challenges, including support from loved ones, peer support, study groups, calendars/schedules, and tutors.

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### Results / Evaluation (2)

*(R.1b) What are their perceptions of social belonging and their identity as engineers?*

	CAPS	NON CAPS
Engineering/CS Identity (1=least strong, 5=most strong)	3.90	3.58
Recognition of Identity by instructors, peers, and parents (1=least strong, 7=most strong)	5.83	5.0

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### Results / Evaluation (3)

*(R.2) How does participating in CAPS mentoring affect their academic achievement and their preferences for pursuing challenging occupations and research?*

	CAPS	NON CAPS
	(1 = Strongly not recognized, 7 = Strongly recognized)	
Spring 2018 GPA	3.44	3.52
Spring 2019 GPA	3.31	3.45
	CAPS	NON CAPS
	(1 = not at all, 5 = a great deal)	
Career plans		
Intend an E/CS career	4.83	4.5
Committed to E/CS career	4.83	4.25
Intend to apply to Grad school	3.5	4.0
Interest in Grad school	4.0	4.0

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### Results / Evaluation (4)

*(R.3) What is the relationship, if any, between their perceptions and academic outcomes?*

- Correlations predicting end-of-year GPA from the reported recognition of scholars' engineering identity in R.2; too small sample data
- While not conclusive, these data suggest that the trends of higher engineering identity for CAPS scholars, and greater recognition of their engineering identity from their instructors/peers/family, as compared to their matched peers, may provide protective benefits as time moves forward.

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## Results / Evaluation (5)

### (R.4) What is the impact on the trained advisors?

- At the end of the first year, 50% immediate success in establishing relationships with their mentees and 50% initial struggles connecting with students; discomfort around discussing the personal lives.
- After Fall'19 faculty training, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1=Poor; 5=Excellent),
  - Mentors rated "Improving my understanding on cultural differences" the highest (M=4.7) for different aspects of the training.
  - Mentors felt "competent" (57%) or "very competent" (29%) in working with people of different cultural backgrounds.
  - Mentors felt "confident" (57%) or "very confident" (43%) in assisting students from a different cultural background than them.
- At the end of the second year, 100% mentors reported increasingly strong relationships with mentees. The scholars are perceived to have developed trust with the mentors, sharing openly with them, including the sharing of family burdens.

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## Impact of COVID-19

- A significant increase in distractions - difficult for many students to find quiet places to study
- More than ever, the scholarship was reported to be critically beneficial to scholars.
- Increased concerns with maintaining the academic standards required to maintain the scholarship during the COVID changes.
- Need assistance in facilitating virtual contact, because this represents a new form of engagement
- Now that all scholars are rising juniors and seniors, the programing requests have narrowed to job market preparations.
- Acknowledging that the frequency of meetings dropped once the campus moved to online learning.

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## Project Key Outcomes

- Successful recruitment of two diverse cohort groups via the Structured Recruitment Process Successful Recruitment
- Establishments of CAPS interventions via support activities
- Establishments of CAPS research
- Scholar Accomplishments - 85% of scholars were retained at the beginning of Spring 2020; 100% of them are expected to achieve 5 year graduation; 30% of the first cohort are expected to achieve 4 year graduation; 50% of the second cohort are expected to achieve 4 year graduation.
  - In general, CAPS students are progressing faster than non-CAPS students academically.

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## Conclusions and Future Plans

- Positive impact on students to have strong engineering identity, sense of social belonging, and career interest in Engineering and Computer Science.
- Specific goals for the CAPS program during year three
  - Modify CAPS activities for online learning environment
  - Continue conducting the longitudinal research study with surveys and academic data comparisons with control group
    - ensure a meaningful number of participations from the control group students
    - disaggregate data further (by major, gender, URM)
    - identify which support and/or activity have the biggest impact on students' success, and address several long standing issues like retention
  - Address the suggested improvements
  - Disseminate our findings to establish a sustainable Scholars Support Program, which can be implemented with scholarships funded by other sources, and which can be transferred to similar culturally diverse institutions to increase success for students who have socio-economic challenges.

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## Acknowledgement

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1742614.



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