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Fostering students as partners: An examination of student-faculty partnerships in Science

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The purpose of this study was to conduct a faculty-wide investigation of student-faculty partnerships within the Faculty of Science at a mid-sized university in Ontario, Canada. Through a mixed methods approach of surveys and semi-structured interviews with undergraduate and graduate students, along with faculty members, we examined the types of student partnerships occurring within the Faculty of Science as well as gathered insights into perspectives of the benefits and challenges they experience engaging in these partnerships. Subject-based research and inquiry and learning, teaching, and assessment partnerships were most commonly reported by participants. Students reported social, personal, and career development benefits from their involvement in student-faculty partnership activities. Common barriers included difficulties finding opportunities to engage in partnership activities, social barriers (e.g., financial stability), power imbalances, difficult working environments, and personal challenges. Among faculty, benefits included collaboration and relationship building, broadening perspectives and gaining feedback, personal satisfaction, and institutional and career-related benefits. Challenges consisted of difficult interpersonal dynamics and maintaining relationships, student management, time management, and external influences.