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Developing Cancer Biology Pedagogy through Student-Faculty Partnerships

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Developing Cancer Biology Pedagogy through Student-Faculty Partnerships

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Undergraduate teaching labs are useful tools to facilitate and enhance student learning. In the lab environment, experiential learning through hands-on activities complements traditional lectures and further deepens understanding and application of the subject material. To keep teaching curriculum up to date, it is essential to develop new teaching labs that reflect current scientific topics and methodologies. This ensures that the student experience is impactful and relevant. To develop a lab that will significantly enrich the learning experience for incoming undergraduate students, a team of senior undergraduate students worked in partnership with both Science faculty and staff to develop a new teaching lab focused on cancer biology for the introductory Cell Biology course. The new teaching lab showcases the multifactorial nature of cancer as a disease, as well as the connection between research and medicine. In collaboration with Let's Talk Science, the new teaching lab was modified into an educational workshop for secondary students. Further partnership with the Windsor Cancer Research Group will allow adaptation of this workshop for use in their public cancer education program. The participation of senior undergraduate students in the development of new curriculum has been transformative. Their involvement has strengthened student-faculty partnerships and engaged students from the undergraduate community. Through the development of this new teaching lab, the team of undergraduate students have gained a deeper understanding of cancer biology, research and science education, while successfully developing curriculum that can be implemented in an educational setting and adapted for the community. This student-faculty research partnership can also serve as a model for future development of novel pedagogical tools in other Science labs and opportunities for students to engage in service learning. Moreover, it may also be adapted by other Faculties as a mechanism to engage undergraduate students in their areas of discipline.