

SUMMER ACTIVITIES EVALUATION REPORT

*External Evaluation: Neuroscience Research Opportunity to Increase Diversity
(NeuroID), University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras*

*Irving E. Vega, Ph.D., José E. García Arrarás, Ph.D.
NeuroID Program Directors*



Prepared by

Nicole M. Ortiz Vega, M.S.

Marizaida Sánchez Cesáreo, Ph.D.



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Introduction

The University of Puerto Rico hosts the Neuroscience Research Opportunity to Increase Diversity (NeuroID) Program. The primary goal of NeuroID is to foster and enhance the interest of undergraduate students to pursue a research career in neuroscience through the integration of formal courses, community outreach opportunities, and mentored research experience. NeuroID is the integration of three training components (Academic, Research and Community Outreach) embody in the philosophical approach of “research with purpose”, having as expected outcomes increase motivation, civic responsibility, empathy and career engagement. This novel approach supplements the formal training program with activities that provide opportunities to engage the community and gain experience on transmitting the acquired knowledge.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The Center for Evaluation and Sociomedical Research (CIES) of the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus partnered with the NeuroID Program of the University of Puerto Rico to perform a process evaluation for the project. This report summarizes the evaluation of the **Summer Activities 2011**. The evaluation focused on participants' satisfaction with the following activities: *Laboratory Safety: OPASO, Laboratory Notebook and Etiquette, How to prepare and abstract, How to prepare a poster, Oral Scientific Presentation, NeuroEthics, Graduate School and Presentation of NeuroID scholars*.

Methods and Procedure

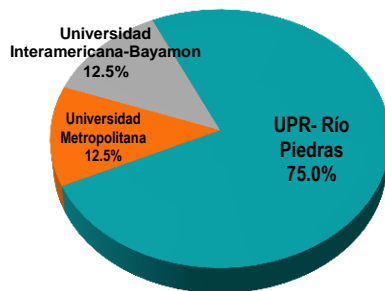
Students' satisfactions with the summer activities were evaluated through an online questionnaire. The SurveyMonkey.com website was used to design the instrument and allow students access to the questionnaire. Students were invited to participate by email. Students email addresses were provided by the program staff. Weekly reminders were sent to those who had not completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire includes 13 questions through which socio-demographic information, as well as information pertaining to general satisfaction and specific satisfaction with various aspects of the training was gathered. The survey was designed to be completed in 10 to 15 minutes.

Results

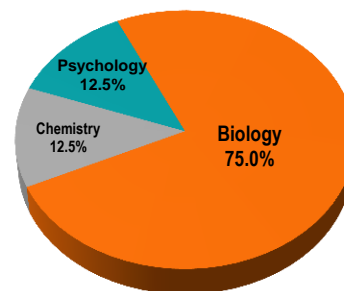
Demographic

There were a total of 8 participants. More than half of the students were female (62.5%), while 37.5% were male. The majority of the students (75.0%) were affiliated to the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus (see Graph 1). Most of the students (75.0%) reported Biology as their major (see Graph 2).

Graph 1. Academic Institution Affiliation



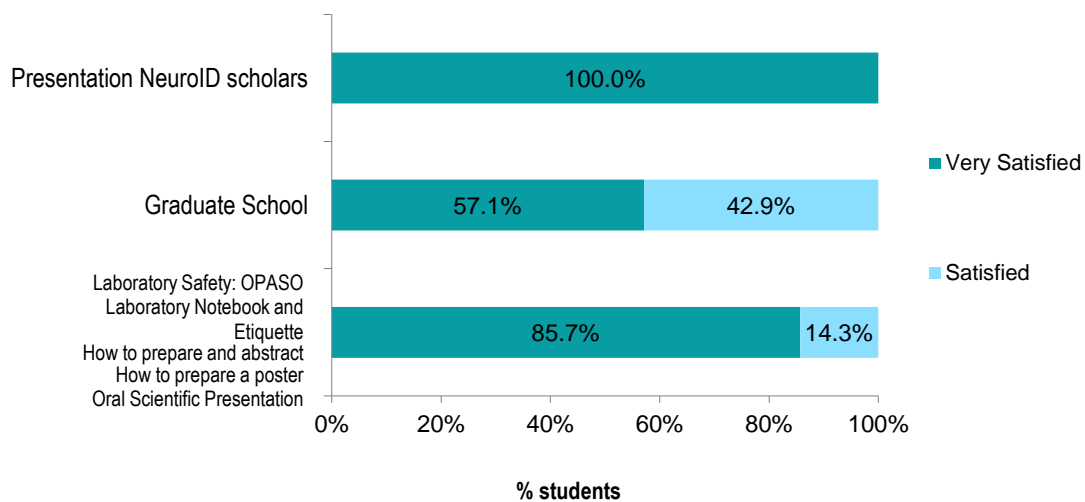
Graph 2. Students Major (Academic Concentration)



Summer Activities General Satisfaction

In general, the majority of the students were very satisfied with the summer activities. It is important to highlight that “Presentation of research project by NeuroID scholars” was the activity with the highest level of satisfaction among students (see Graph 3).

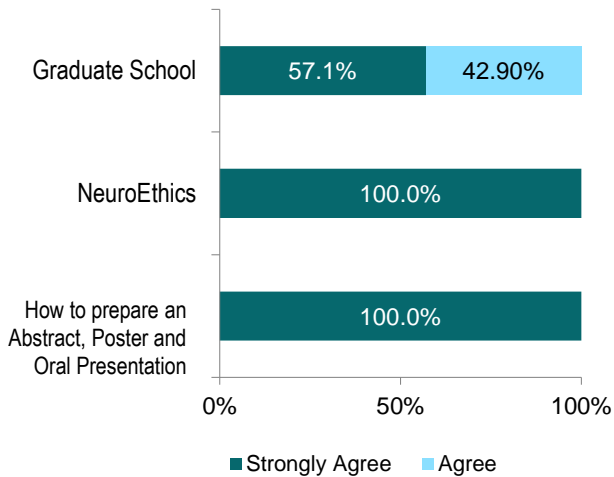
Graph 3. Overall, how satisfied were you with the following activities?



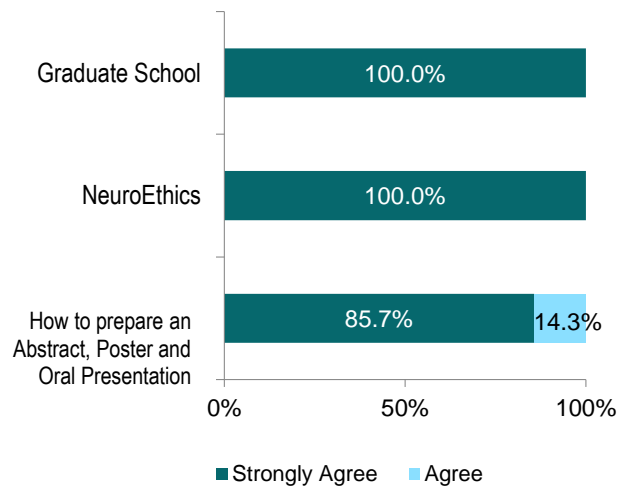
How to prepare an Abstract, Poster and Oral Presentation, NeuroEthics and Graduate School

Students were asked to evaluate specific aspects of three activities sessions. In general, all the student (100.0%, n=8) “strongly agree” that the three activities **offered useful information and strategies**. Similarly, all of the students “strongly agree” that the *NeuroEthics* activity **met their expectations** (see Graph 4). The speaker’s communication skills were also evaluated. All of the students (100.0%, n=7) “strongly agree” that **speakers communicated effectively** during all three activities. In addition, the majority of the students (85.7%) “strongly agree” the **speakers demonstrated competence in the topic** (see Graph 5). Moreover, the majority of the students would recommend these activities to others (see Graph 6).

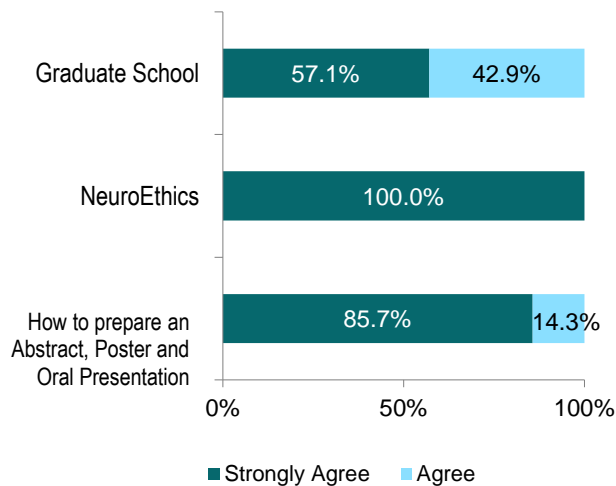
Graph 4. Activities sessions met my expectations



Graph 5. Speakers demonstrated competence in the topic

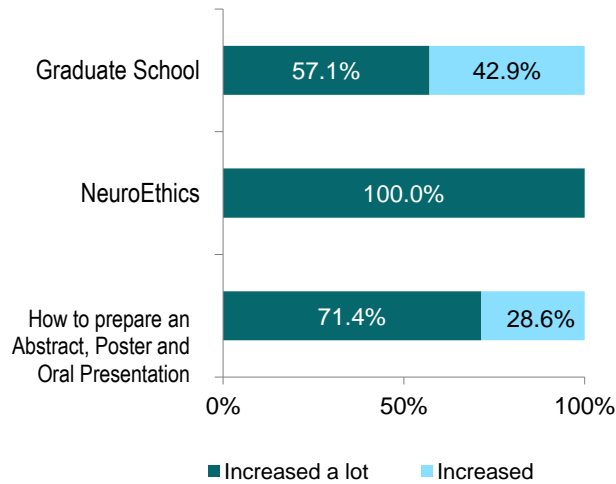


Graph 6. Recommend these activities to others



Students were also asked to rate how these three activities changed their overall knowledge in the topics presented. In general, more than half of the students reported that their knowledge “increased a lot” (see Graph 7). Finally, participants evaluated their willingness to pursue research careers or a Neurosciences career (see Graph 8 and Figure 1). It is important to highlight that all of the male students considered that NeuroEthics activity “increased a lot” their willingness to pursue a Neurosciences career.

Graph 7. How did these activities change your overall knowledge in the topic presented?



Graph 8. How did these activities change your willingness to pursue a Research career?

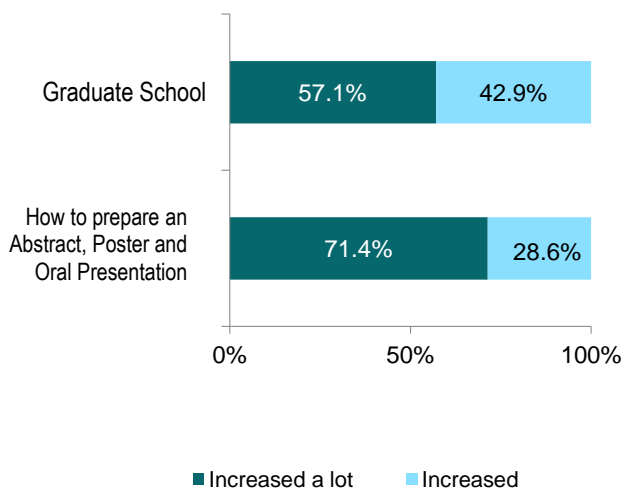


Figure 1. How did these activities change your willingness to pursue a Neurosciences Career?

	Female	Male
Increased a lot	66.7% n=2	100.0% n=4
Increased	33.1% n=1	-

Comments and Recommendations

Students were asked to provide recommendations to improve the activities. The majority of the comments were related to satisfaction with the organization; speaker and the topics of the summer activities (see Table 1).

Activity	Comments
<i>How to prepare an Abstract, Poster and Oral Presentation</i>	<p><i>"The activities were very organized and met with my expectations"</i></p> <p><i>"I will strongly recommend this program for any one that is pursuing a career in science because it doesn't only help you become a better professional but a better human being that is more aware of what is occurring in our society"</i></p>
<i>NeuroEthics</i>	<p><i>"This activity was the most interesting for me. Neuroethics met my expectations and even more because it is a very interesting area in neuroscience. Nevertheless the speaker was really prepared."</i></p> <p><i>"Very interesting topic, I enjoyed hearing and learning about it."</i></p>
<i>Graduate School</i>	<p><i>"This activity was very useful to understand and visualize our next steps in our education."</i></p> <p><i>"It was very helpful to learn about the next step after the bachelor's degree."</i></p>