



NJ ACTS “Stories of Scientists” Project

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Introduction: NJ ACTS' “Stories of Scientists” is a project designed to showcase the NJ ACTS TL1 Fellowship Program and highlight the clinical and translational science fellows, showcasing their interests and inspirations and honing their communication skills.

Methods: 12 NJ ACTS fellows and 1 team member were interviewed on their experiences with NJ ACTS and the TL1 Fellowship Program participation, in conjunction with their pre- or postdoctoral research. A set of preliminary interview questions were curated to explore their research project, how the Fellowship Program takes their research to the next level of translational research, and their interests and hobbies. A project timeline was made to determine the estimated hours to create the videos and podcasts for all fellows. The interviews were scheduled through Outlook, recorded through Zoom, and saved in Box. Each interviewee was researched prior to the interview using available online sourced materials that

included: the NJ ACTS website, LinkedIn profiles, publications, newspaper articles, and personal websites to create a unique interview profile with customized open-ended questions. The Zoom videos were edited through iMovie and Adobe Premiere Elements, and



the audio was edited via GarageBand and Audacity. The fellows provided graphics and images found in their labs' research website to include in their videos to enhance visual storytelling. Stock photos from Unsplash, stock footage from Coverr, and university photographs and videos from Rutgers Digital Asset Library, were added to further visually engage the audience. Weekly meetings were held to update program staff on the status of the project: interviews, edited videos or audio, and program activities. All fellows signed a model release form created using the standard form provided by the Department of University Communications and Marketing to obtain permission to use the subject's image for educational and promotional purposes. The videos will be posted on “NJ ACTS Community Engagement” YouTube channel and on the NJ ACTS website, along with the podcasts. Each will also be shared with the individual fellow to post and share as well.

Results: The 12 early-career researchers featured in NJ ACTS' “Stories of Scientist” are Rutgers, Princeton, and NJIT-trained or -affiliated. The videos and podcasts showcase the stories and



science of these real-world scientists and have been designed to showcase the diversity of the fellows – their backgrounds, areas of studies, and career aspirations. This initiative celebrates the incredible range of personalities, interests, backgrounds, and pursuits that drive discovery and progress. “Stories of Scientists” provides the opportunity to highlight modern-day early-career researchers. The fellows indicated that communication and team science soft skills were important competencies to share complex science information in relatable terms to the communities that their scientific discoveries will impact. The four main goals were achieved: building a narrative, distilling the research, identifying the impact of their research, and personalizing a message. All elements will be present in the completed videos and podcasts.

Discussion: Popular media and initiatives such as the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science suggest the use of science communications is essential to inform, education, and raise awareness of science- and health-related topics to audiences of various levels of expertise. Videos and podcasts are effective media with which to communicate different types of information about science, technology, engineering, and medicine. The interviews demonstrated the diversity of fellowship participants, varying disciplines, backgrounds, and career aspirations. The videos and podcasts showcased clinical and translational science fellows within NJACTS, highlighting the fellows' interests and inspirations, and honing their communication and public speaking skills. The content will be used on the website and social media to increase the visibility of the NJ ACTS TL1 Fellowship Program and encourage prospective participants to apply to the program.

Advantages: Meeting virtually was easy, accessible, and affordable for the user experience. Meeting online has its benefits, for it eliminates any geographic and locational barriers to connecting with fellows.

Limitations: Filming through video conferencing has its technical disadvantages for its poor and unpredictable video and audio. The file size of the recordings is inconsistent to Cloud file sizes and were saved in the University's Box platform to surmount this. Another setback is that the project's scope originally included audio editing of the footage to create podcasts, but due to time constraints and the length of the internship, this was not feasible.