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Promoting student ownership of university science programs: towards building a more equitable scientific educational experience

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Sundial is an organization at Arizona State University that is a collaborative effort of both students and faculty to create a supportive and diverse community within the physical sciences. Sundial is a member of the Access Network of emerging programs aimed at fostering student success and promoting diversity across the country. ASUs commitment to being an inclusive campus results in a unique population of participants with a broad range of academic preparedness. Sundial aims to offer holistic support to these students by offering a research class, summer bridge program, mentoring, outreach, and social programs. Sundial has achieved retention rates that are higher than for students not in the program. In this talk, the strategies used by Sundial to achieve these results will be presented, alongside data about students experiences in the program. A recent study of the mentoring program shows that mentors create important psychosocial and academic support for students; topics discussed amongst mentoring groups include coursework, stress, and campus opportunities. Students also report feeling supported and listened to as a result of mentoring. In addition, Sundial students viewed the summer bridge program as helping them form social connections and increase academic confidence.