



VERMONT AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Program Overview: Larner College of Medicine CLASS OF 2027, 2028 and 2029

The AHEC Scholars Program is a voluntary, nationally recognized program for health professions students. It provides opportunities for students to increase knowledge, strengthen leadership skills, and gain competencies within eight broad topic areas.

National AHEC Scholars Priorities	Emphasis or examples
Interprofessional Education	-team-based care and patient-centered care
Behavioral Health Integration	-services that better address the needs of individuals with behavioral, mental health and substance use conditions, including training for health professionals to address burnout and resiliency
Connecting Communities and Supporting Health Professionals/ Community Health Workers (CHWs)	-increase training and development of paraprofessionals who serve as connectors between health professionals and the community
Virtual Learning and Telehealth	-leverage technology to improve curricula and community-based experiential training
Social Determinants of Health	-addressing food insecurity, economic inequality, access to education, social and community context, access to health care, neighborhood and built environment, etc.
Cultural Competency	-care that address the unique culture, language, and health literacy of diverse communities
Medical Practice Transformation	-quality improvement, care coordination, cost containment, rural health care, primary care, care for underserved or disadvantaged populations
Current and Emerging Health Issues	-current HRSA-approved topics: Opioids and Substance Use Disorders, Oral Health as part of Overall Health, COVID-19

The AHEC Scholars Program and its projects are part of AHEC's longitudinal workforce research about influences on specialty selection and future practice—location, type of practice, and the patient population served.

National AHEC Scholars requirements:

To achieve recognition as an AHEC Scholar, students must complete a minimum of 80 hours of AHEC eligible activities per year in two separate years (160 hours total). The 80 hours must be comprised of 40 Clinical or Field hours and 40 Didactic hours.

Interested students are required to “enroll” in the AHEC Scholars Program. If you have not already enrolled, the enrollment form is available on the www.vtahec.org website.

Vermont AHEC Scholars Program at LCOM

The **VT AHEC Scholars** program offers extra-curricular activities that allow for exploration of identified topics that may not be deeply covered in the LCOM curriculum. The overarching goal of the AHEC Scholars Program is for students to gain an understanding of the social and cultural factors that influence an individual's overall health and ability to access care. We aim to prepare tomorrow's health professionals to be leaders in interprofessional, transformative practice, especially for those with the greatest needs. Program activities are designed to be relevant for all medical specialties and our flexible pathways approach offers students the option to focus on the topics of most interest to them.

Students pursuing the designation of **AHEC Scholar** must meet the national requirements: Program duration of at least two years, with each of the years including 40 hours of didactic education and 40 hours of experiential or clinical training, for a total of 160 hours. **Vermont AHEC** offers five opportunities for LCOM students to complete a year of AHEC Scholars eligible activity.

80-HOUR PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES

AHEC Sponsored Education and Mentoring SIG (can complete in M1 or M2)

- Didactic curriculum offered August – January
- Field hours include mentoring/medical education activities associated with the HERO and/or Med Mentors SIG groups. The 40 field and 40 didactic hours are completed in the same M1 or M2 year
- Interested students apply following an orientation session in August

AHEC Summer Projects in the Research/Quality Improvement or Education/Mentoring Tracks

- Projects completed June-August (summer between M1 and M2)
- Approximately 100 hours: 40 hours didactic and 60 hours of field activity
- Factoring the compressed timeframe and commitment required to participate in this AHEC workforce research activity, a \$1,500 participation stipend may be available
- Competitive application process in February/students are selected and notified in early March

AHEC Sponsored Public Health Projects (PHP)

- Projects completed Fall (M2)
- Students rank and are assigned to an AHEC- sponsored project via LCOM PHP assignment process

AHEC Community Engagement and Service

- Can be completed in M2, M3, or M4 year
- Students apply via a rolling application and are selected based on the needs of our community agency partners and the strength of the student application

AHEC Sponsored Advanced Integration elective courses (4th Year elective courses)

- Courses are offered during several 2-week elective blocks, currently Sep, Oct, Feb, or Mar (M4)
- Current topics include Addiction Medicine, Community Engagement and Social Medicine, and LGBT Health. Course topics and dates subject to change
- Courses are announced in November prior to LCOM's Advanced Integration lottery

Only those students completing all requirements -- **a minimum of two 80-hour pathway activities in two separate years** -- will be designated as “Vermont AHEC Scholar” at time of graduation.

AHEC activities are developed to complement and expand upon LCOM learning opportunities. Program activities allow medical students to gain a deeper understanding of communities through opportunities to interact with providers, policy makers, community leaders, and others. AHEC Scholars 80-hour pathway options are distributed across the four years at LCOM, with several options in M1 and M2 to allow students to complete requirements during foundations years, if they choose. Once minimum requirements are met, students are encouraged to continue working with AHEC. Many students who have completed the requirements choose to enroll in a 4th year elective.

AHEC maintains a record of eligible activities for students enrolled in the AHEC Scholars program. AHEC transcripts are provided to students at regular intervals, and we are always happy to answer questions about progress toward meeting requirements. Please reach out to Patti Smith Urie to check in on your status or discuss pathway options. Patti.smith-urie@med.uvm.edu

VERMONT AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM 80-HOUR PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES — AT A GLANCE

