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## **AHEC Career Enhancement Scholars (ACES)**

The ACES program was developed in 2001 to provide programming for students on a long-term basis, rather than one-time events. ACES program participants are better prepared for entry-level jobs and/or additional health career training as well as enduring partners for a healthy Missouri.

Components of this program include: individual career plans, online learning modules aligned with the National Health Skills Standards, workshops with focus on academics and health career preparation, and expectations of job shadowing, volunteering, community service, and leadership projects.

The programming has a multi-year approach with workshops presented over a three-year cycle. Workshop content includes: health literacy, service learning, emergency preparedness, vulnerable populations, public health, cultural competency, and professionalism. Students enjoy dissection workshops and opportunities to visit health professions schools.

The goal is to nurture students' health career interests, provide them with every opportunity to explore those careers, and prepare them as well as possible to take the next steps on their career paths. AHEC develops relationships with students that will continue into their professional lives when they will mentor and train young pre-health professionals. In addition to building relationships with AHEC staff that can help provide specific opportunities to meet student needs, the program allows students with similar interests to explore these careers together. A student may be the only person in the rural school with an interest in a health career, and this program provides the support he or she needs.

Since 2001, more than 1900 students have been or continue to be "ACES". AHEC has contributed to the success of many health professionals with many more students in the "pipeline" as they prepare for health professions careers.



*Photo: ACES now practicing professionals – a dentist in a rural community, a primary care provider in an underserved community, and an oncology nurse at Children's Mercy Hospital. These successes are repeated across the state.*

*MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.*

*The MAHEC partners include:*

- A.T. Still University – Kirksville
- University of Missouri – Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC – Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC – St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC – St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC – Springfield

***MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health***