# SURGE Cohort 1 Baseline Survey Report

## Introduction

The survey of Cohort 1 students was disseminated four days prior to the kickoff meeting.

## Summary of Key Findings

### Recruitment to SURGE

Cohort 1 students reported learning about SURGE through three primary recruitment mechanisms, including their advisor (n=4), a friend or colleague (n=3), or email listserv (n=3). Only one student reported first hearing about SURGE via social media.

### Catching Students’ Attention

Students were asked an open-ended question about what caught their attention when they first learned about the SURGE program. Responses centered around several key themes, including:

* Hands-on or applied experience (n=5)
* Focus on minority and/or underserved populations (n=8)
* Hazards content area
* Academic focus and training (n=3)

### Previous Professional Development Programs

While a few (n=4) students have participated in other professional development programs, including academic training, service, and mentoring programs, the majority (n=7) had not. SURGE is thus poised to provide a resource that most students have not accessed in the past. Similarly, only 4 of the 11 students had previously written a professional development plan previously.

### Prior Work on Hazards and Disasters

When asked about the extent to which their prior work had focused on hazards and disasters on a scale ranging from “entirely” to “not at all,” participants’ responses indicated that most had moderate experience. Responses are summarized below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Answer | % | Count |
| 1 | Entirely | 9.09% | 1 |
| 2 | Largely | 18.18% | 2 |
| 3 | A moderate amount | 27.27% | 3 |
| 4 | Somewhat | 36.36% | 4 |
| 5 | Not at all | 9.09% | 1 |
|  | Total | 100% | 11 |

Asked to elaborate on these experiences, responses primarily (n=5) reflected basic research experience, while two respondents referenced papers or coursework.

### Understanding of the SURGE Mission

Asked to describe their understanding of the mission of the SURGE program, students’ responses (n=8) focused on:

* Research on disasters (n=1)
* Outreach and training for minority students (n=7)
* Addressing disproportionate disaster impacts in minority communities (n=6)
* Bridging the research-practice gap (n=1)
* Bringing new perspectives to the hazards and disasters field (n=2)
* Diversifying the hazards and disasters field (n=7)

### Expectations Regarding SURGE

Students were asked on a five-point Likert scale to rate their level of agreement with two statements indicating their expectations about the SURGE program’s alignment with their academic interests and potential professional benefits. Responses indicate that students overwhelmingly felt that the program would benefit them professionally and was a good match for their interests.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Question | Strongly agree |  | Somewhat agree |  | Neither agree nor disagree |  | Somewhat disagree |  | Strongly disagree |  | Total |
| 2 | The SURGE program's mission is aligned with my academic interests. | 80.00% | 8 | 20.00% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 3 | My participation in the SURGE program will be beneficial for me professionally. | 100.00% | 10 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |

Asked an open-ended question about what they hoped to achieve through their participation in SURGE, students’ responses coalesced around several themes:

* Applied or solutions-oriented research opportunities (n=4)
* An expanded professional network (n=5)
* Develop or hone expertise in hazards and disasters research (n=6)

Asked what aspects of the programming offered through SURGE they felt would be most valuable, open-ended responses primarily focused on networking opportunities with colleagues and potential mentors (n=5), engagement in meaningful research experiences (n=4), workshops and other training (n=3), and opportunities to pursue specific research interests (n=3).

### Preparedness to Pursue Hazards Research I

In order to understand students’ thoughts about disaster research broadly and studies focused on marginalized populations in particular, we asked them to respond to a battery of statements on a five-point Likert scale with categories ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Responses indicate that students generally understood how to engage in disaster research and focus their studies on marginalized groups and felt relatively prepared to do so. Further, they overwhelmingly reported familiarity with the field of disaster research. Fewer students felt that they had the support that they needed to pursue these interests, and respondents generally felt somewhat less familiar with the work of disaster practitioners relative to researchers. Finally, respondents were least likely to agree strongly with the statement that they felt connected to a professional community engaged in disaster research.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Question | Strongly agree |  | Somewhat agree |  | Neither agree nor disagree |  | Somewhat disagree |  | Strongly disagree |  | Total |
| 1 | I understand how to use my STEM training to explore disaster-related subject matter. | 40.00% | 4 | 40.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 0 | 20.00% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 2 | I understand how to use my STEM training to explore disaster-related subject matter involving marginalized populations affected disproportionately by disasters. | 40.00% | 4 | 40.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 0 | 20.00% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 3 | I feel prepared to use my STEM training to explore disaster-related research questions involving marginalized populations. | 40.00% | 4 | 40.00% | 4 | 10.00% | 1 | 10.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 4 | I have the support that I need to pursue my academic interests in disasters. | 40.00% | 4 | 30.00% | 3 | 20.00% | 2 | 10.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 5 | I am familiar with the field of disaster research. | 50.00% | 5 | 30.00% | 3 | 20.00% | 2 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 6 | I am familiar with the work of disaster practitioners. | 20.00% | 2 | 50.00% | 5 | 30.00% | 3 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 7 | I feel connected a professional community that is engaged in disaster research. | 20.00% | 2 | 30.00% | 3 | 20.00% | 2 | 20.00% | 2 | 10.00% | 1 | 10 |

### SURGE Students’ Experiences with Graduate Training

Another module sought information about the students’ experiences with graduate training and professional development more broadly. Again, they were asked to respond to a series of statements on a five-point Likert scale with categories ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

### STEM Careers in Hazards and Disasters

Finally, students were asked a series of questions pertaining to their STEM career paths. Responses indicate that, although students maintain a high degree of interest in translating their disaster studies into their professional work, some struggled with uncertainty about how to do so and exhibited varying degrees of preparedness. For example, there was substantial variation in the extent to which the students felt prepared to engage in cross-disciplinary research, a critical skill in the future of the field. Further, some students were unsure whether they had enough support to pursue their career goals.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Question | Strongly agree |  | Somewhat agree |  | Neither agree nor disagree |  | Somewhat disagree |  | Strongly disagree |  | Total |
| 1 | I understand how to translate my graduate training into a STEM career in disaster or hazards-related research. | 30.00% | 3 | 50.00% | 5 | 0.00% | 0 | 10.00% | 1 | 10.00% | 1 | 10 |
| 2 | I feel prepared to pursue a STEM career related to disasters or hazards based on my graduate training. | 40.00% | 4 | 30.00% | 3 | 10.00% | 1 | 10.00% | 1 | 10.00% | 1 | 10 |
| 3 | I have the support that I need to pursue my career goals. | 40.00% | 4 | 0.00% | 0 | 50.00% | 5 | 0.00% | 0 | 10.00% | 1 | 10 |
| 4 | I feel connected to a professional community within my discipline. | 40.00% | 4 | 20.00% | 2 | 10.00% | 1 | 20.00% | 2 | 10.00% | 1 | 10 |
| 5 | I am interested in engaging in cross-disciplinary research. | 90.00% | 9 | 10.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |
| 6 | I feel prepared to engage in cross-disciplinary research. | 60.00% | 6 | 30.00% | 3 | 0.00% | 0 | 10.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 10 |