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# The Clinical Research Internship Portal (CRISP): Facilitating placement and onboarding of clinical research interns at Duke University



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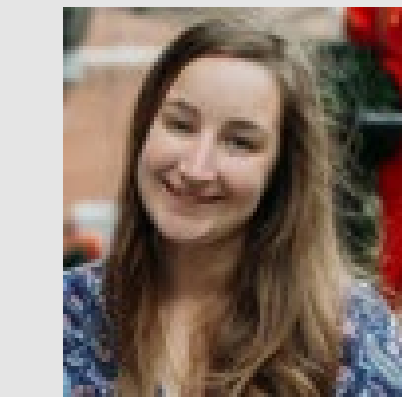
## Meet the Authors



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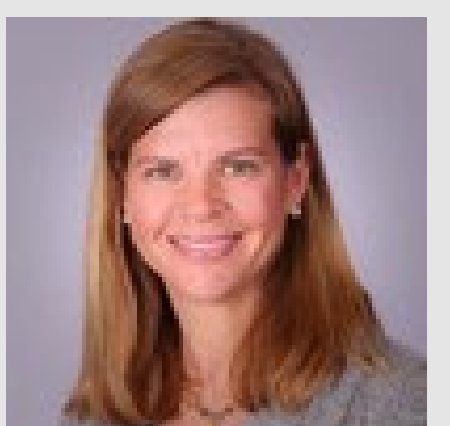
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## Abstract

**Background/Purpose:** To address institutional requirements regarding compliance, oversight, and experiential opportunities for student interns performing clinical research activities in DUSOM and DUSON environments.

**Objectives:** We created the Clinical Research Internship Portal (CRISP) to support intern matchmaking with clinical research teams, as well as formalized onboarding of interns, thereby allowing for more meaningful learning experiences through defined goals and expectations.

**Methods:** In partnership with the Office of Research Contracts, we developed an affiliation agreement defining internship parameters, to be co-signed by an intern’s home institution. A student, an affiliated institution, or a Duke investigator may initiate internship matchmaking requests. Requests are triaged according to the potential intern’s institutional affiliation status; unaffiliated institutions may request an agreement by contacting CRISP. If a student is from an affiliated institution, CRISP is leveraged to provide a framework and guardrails for the internship experience.

**Outcomes:** Launched in 2021, CRISP’s impact on the Duke research training landscape may be measured by several metrics, including:

- 14 institutional affiliation agreements signed to date
- 107 student interns from 10 institutions placed across 28 departments/institutes
- Improved access to clinical and research systems aligned with clinical research activities

**Significance/Implications/Relevance:** Streamlining intern placements has lessened pain points related to the inclusion of students in our research environment—both for investigators and institutional partners—enhancing the learning outcomes of these experiential opportunities in the process.



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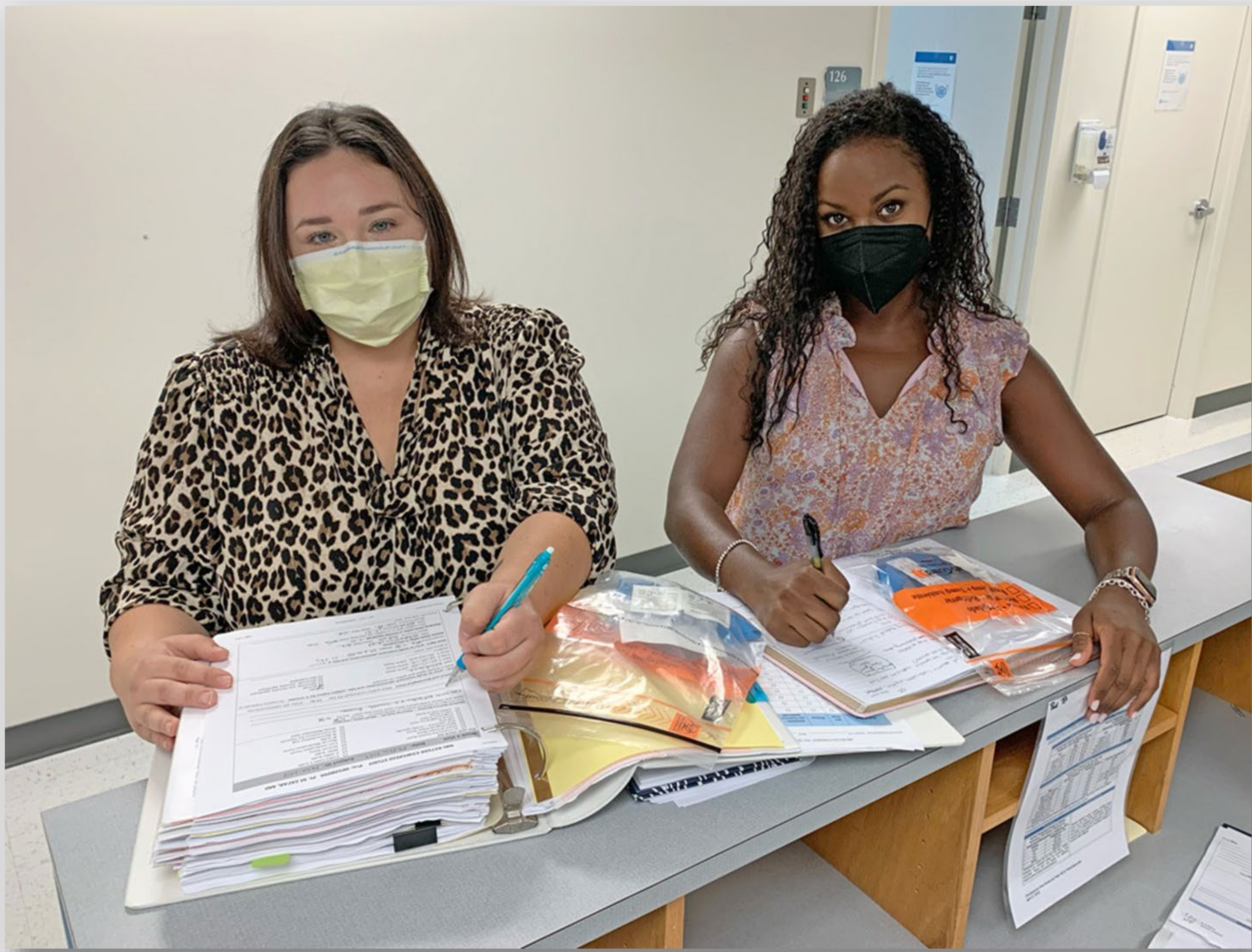
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## Introduction

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, SOM leadership recognized the need to improve monitoring and increase accountability around student internships in the patient care environment. CTSI and DOCR were enlisted to address this need, which resulted in the creation of the Clinical Research Internship Portal (CRISP) to support intern matchmaking with clinical research teams and the formalized onboarding of interns in compliance with institutional requirements. Beyond serving in this oversight capacity, CRISP has developed tools and supplemental offerings to promote more meaningful learning experiences with an emphasis on defined goals and expectations for interns.

*How do we train tomorrow's workforce in today's research environment?*



**Fig. 1.** Durham Technical Community College students who participated in a 6-month internship via Duke CRISP are now pursuing research careers.



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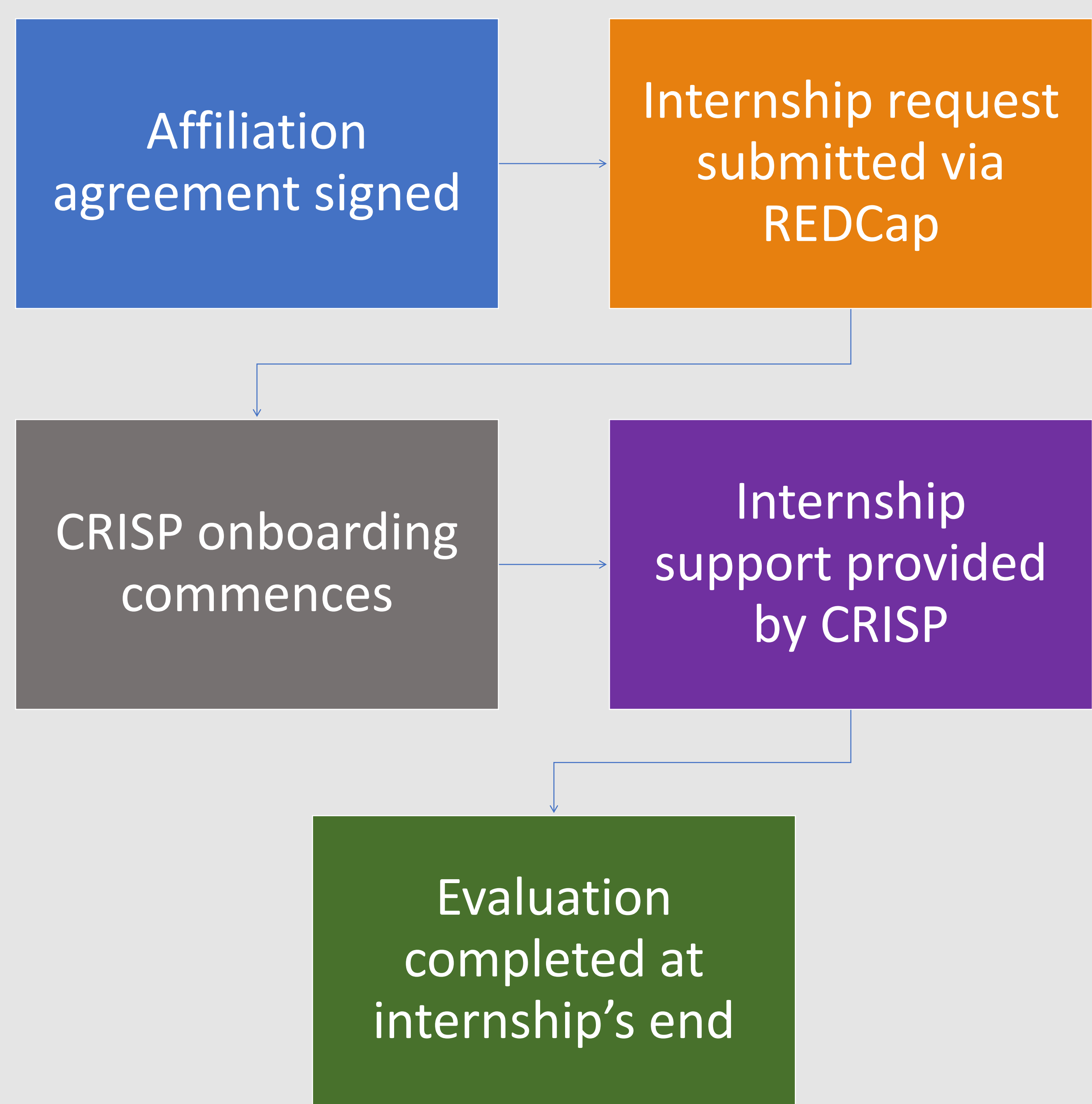


Fig. 2. Standard CRISP workflow

## Methods

An affiliation agreement, co-signed by an intern’s home institution, defines the internship parameters and serves as the basis for CRISP activities. Internship requests may be initiated by a student, an affiliated institution, or a Duke investigator. Requests are triaged according to the potential intern’s institutional affiliation status. If a student is from an affiliated institution, CRISP is leveraged to provide a framework and guardrails for the internship experience, including:

- Guidance on, and assistance with, compilation of required onboarding documentation and definition of the educational goals of the internship
- Required online trainings for interns and their supervisors to ensure a successful and compliant learning experience
- Tools (e.g., documentation checklist, onboarding welcome packet and learning plan, code of conduct) for intern supervisors
- A 7-session professional development series for interns, offered both in-person and asynchronously
- Evaluation support to gauge internship success and impact

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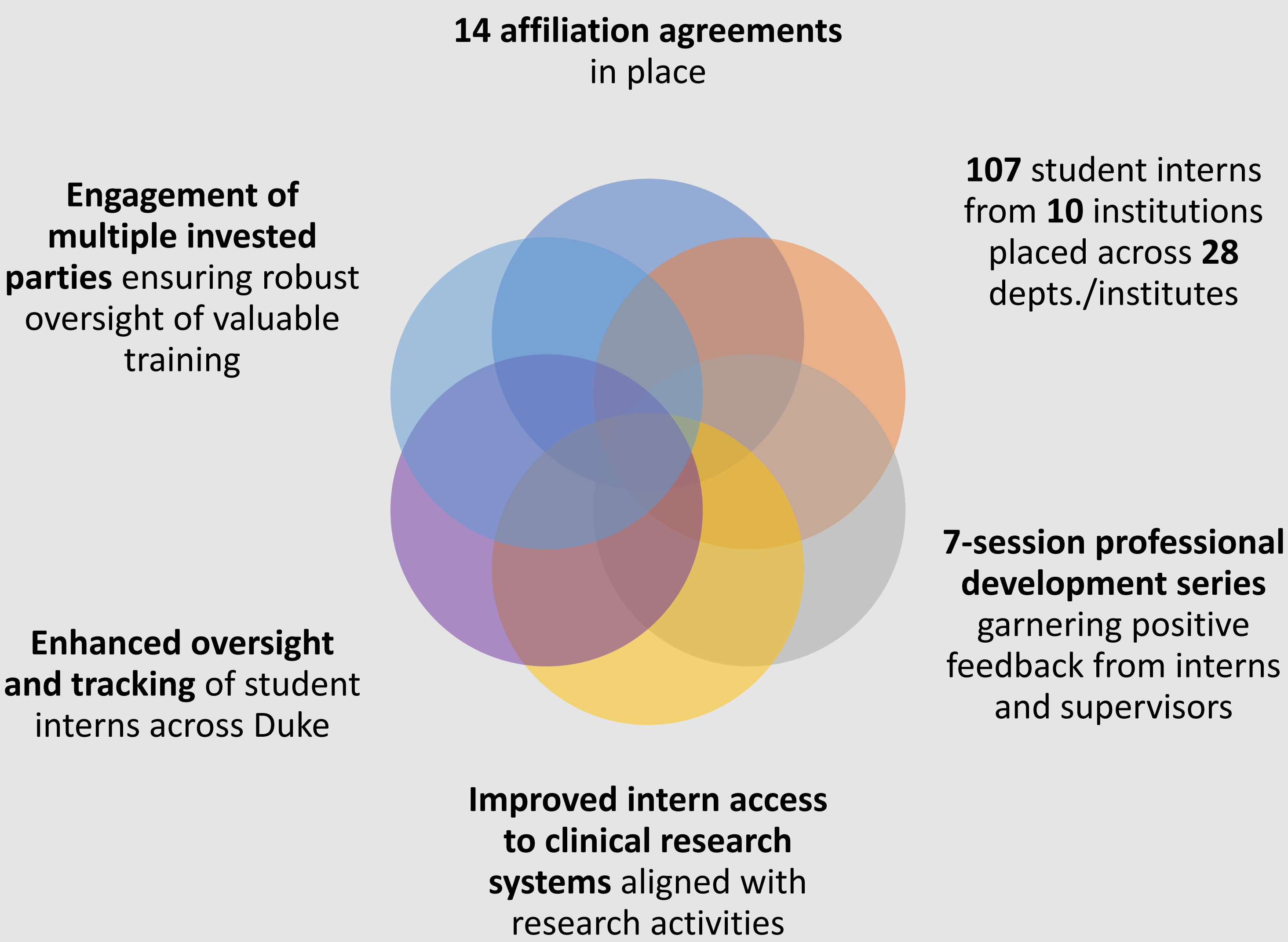
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## Results

Launched in 2021, CRISP’s impact on the Duke research training landscape may be measured by the following metrics:

- 14 institutional affiliation agreements signed to date
- 107 student interns from 10 institutions placed across 28 SOM and SON departments/institutes as of January 2025
- Improved access to clinical and research systems aligned with clinical research activities
- Enhanced oversight and tracking of student interns across the Duke enterprise
- Expansion of portal services to include both internal (Duke) and external student interns

CRISP has engaged invested parties inside and outside of Duke to ensure robust oversight of these training opportunities and to create new pathways into our workforce.





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## Conclusion

Streamlining intern placements has lessened pain points related to the inclusion of students in our research environment, both for investigators and institutional partners. Student interns also benefit from the more structured experiences resulting from accountability checkpoints provided by the CRISP model for both interns and their preceptors.

Future plans include increasing the number of affiliated institutions, building partnerships with Duke CRUs and centers for routine hosting of interns, scaling up the professional development series to include additional topics and audiences, and formally evaluating the success of the portal’s offerings in achieving workforce development goals.

*To learn more about CRISP, visit our website.*



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