EXITO Community,

Last fall we started the school year and jumped right into our respective roles as Scholars, mentors, faculty and staff. We shared with each other the challenges of what we balance in our multiple roles as researchers and unique individuals who are still understanding what bringing our whole selves to research really looks like. We continue to grapple with imposter syndrome and recognize that it is an experience that persists no matter what level of scholarship or professional standing we achieve.

Though these continue to be topics for our own reflection and self-improvement, we have worked too hard personally/professionally/academically to not show and share with others what we have been able to accomplish thus far. Now is the time to look ahead to how we can confidently present our accomplishments and share our stories!

This spring we want to move from talking about where we are from to where we are going. We will start with a very simple concept: how we view ourselves. Ultimately, how we see our abilities, our strengths, and our weaknesses impacts our ability to put our best foot forward.

Often times, we begin with our flaws and what we lack. We spend our time comparing ourselves to others, doubting we have what it takes, and hiding parts of our personality we don’t like as we step into new spaces and relationships. We aren’t just talking to Scholars, the journey towards a positive view of ourselves is one we are all on together.

We need to encourage each other to stop putting on our most critical eye when looking at ourselves; this holds us back from realizing our full potential. This month, we wanted to provide a few resources that will help you consider how you see yourself and how you can more fully embrace a positive self-view as you continue on your academic and professional journey.

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**Ted Talk: Meet Yourself, A User's Guide to Building Self-Esteem**

Niko Everett would like to introduce you to someone she thinks you should know - YOU! Niko demonstrates how anyone can get a glimpse into their own transformational looking glass too. Inspirational and empowering.

**Watch the video**

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**Quick Activity: Just do it!**

Get out a piece of paper and a pen, write down ten things you really like about yourself.
If you want more, check out the questions here for further reflection.

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**Ten Things To Try...**

1. Envision your future success, imagine how things will go in the best case scenario.
2. Spend your time in positive environments with positive people.
3. Slow down.
4. Have perspective, don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.
5. Add positivity to someone else's life on a daily basis.
6. Sleep.
7. Learn to take criticism.
8. Take risks and be ok with failure.
9. Don’t denigrate yourself, even in a joking way.
10. Speak to yourself as you would to a friend.

These were adapted from this blog on how to stay positive.

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**Program Highlights**

**Less than 2 weeks of recruitment!**

The application for our next cohort of Scholars is due February 28th.

We have had over 450 applications started but only 9% of applicants have completed application. Individual efforts to support our applicants have made a significant difference in increasing successfully submitted applications. If you haven't yet, please connect with your networks to spread the word and offer support to prospective Scholars!

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**Two events you don't want to miss!**

**March 2:** First Indigenous Astronaut in space, John Herrington, will give a STEM talk at Clackamas
Community College! 150 spots have been reserved for EXITO participants. Free, but registration is required.

**March 3:** Professor of Medicine at OHSU and Portland VAMC Dr. Somnath Saha speaks on equity in medicine. Free but register here to let us know you will attend!

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**Nyabony Gat**  
Health Sciences  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Hometown: South Sudan

*I chose to be a part of EXITO because science is my passion and this program is giving me an opportunity to grow and challenge myself in this area. Before EXITO, my view of research was very limited, so when I learned research was more than just sitting at a lab bench and micro-pipetting, it immediately caught my interest. What I am most excited about is being able to go on this journey with people who come from similar backgrounds, but bring in different perspectives. Being a part of EXITO has limited my doubts of whether the STEM path is right for me. One great thing I’ve learned thus far is being true to who you are; *I should not see my identity as a barrier, but instead use it as strength and a catapult.* Every day through the support of the EXITO community I am reminded that I do belong. I hope with the skills that I gain and the connections I make in EXITO I can be a voice for my community and begin to address underlying issues as a student, as a future physician, and as a biomedical researcher.*