Hello EXITO Community!

Big shout out and thank you to all of our EXITO Scholars, mentors, and faculty who contributed to our EXITO Connections campaign. The Connections campaign was a large part of this year's Scholar recruitment strategy and was all about emphasizing the invaluable connections we make as a result of being a part of the EXITO Community.

Below are some of the Connection stories we were able to highlight.

January was also National Mentoring Month; this was a perfect fit as our Connections campaign highlighted the different forms of mentorship that happen within BUILD EXITO. We loved reading stories from a range of Scholars, mentors, and faculty who candidly shared their experience and insight into making lasting connections.

Themes included the importance of reaching out to meet new people and how life-altering relationships can be. We were also inspired by the mutual respect for the co-learning and co-production that occurs within EXITO mentoring relationships.

If you have a story you would like feature in an upcoming newsletter or social media post, please contact us with your idea at exito@pdx.edu.

Thanks again for sharing your stories with us, here's to another year of new and deeper connections!

The EXITO staff
This month, we would like to highlight one of our Graduate Assistants of the BUILD EXITO staff: Damon David Tidwell! Read below to learn a little more about Damon.

Damon David Tidwell
Graduate Assistant
Institution: Portland State University
Hometown: Phoenix, AZ

I chose to participate in the BUILD EXITO program purely because of the work it is doing with research and creating a pathway for students to continue on into learning about the many exciting layers of discovery related to people, environment, health; and promoting underrepresented students who want to be scholars in biomedical research to help solve today’s most pressing problems with health disparities. Research to me can be an exciting way to delve into the deeper meaning of certain health phenomena through social science and scientific means.

On a personal level, I have had family members plagued by deadly health challenges that could have been prevented if discovered and treated earlier in their lives. Although, I am in the urban planning field I believe it resonates with social sciences and the built environment. The places in
which we live are either healthy, safe avenues to come and go as we please or they are not. But to enjoy the environments in which we live then we have to be healthy as individuals and for our family and friends and research contributes to all of these things in order to live healthily and happily.

*My goal is to support our diverse group of undergraduate scholars pursuing research in biomedical majors to solve problems in our own communities in which we live, work and play in.*