



UPPEP

University Psychedelic
Education Program

Impact Report
2025



Dear Friends and Supporters,

It's hard to believe how far we've come in such a short period of time. U-PEP began with a deeply personal experience that opened my eyes to the healing potential of psychedelic-assisted care - and to the existing gaps in how we prepare healthcare professionals to responsibly and equitably engage in this emerging field.

After witnessing the impact this medicine had on a loved one, my husband and I felt a deep desire to give back. We asked ourselves: *How can we, with my background in healthcare and non-profits - and as a couple with a charitable foundation - help move the needle forward in this field?* What began as a personal effort to pay it forward through developing a small learning series led to a pilot which grew into something I could have never fully imagined: a national initiative with inspiring momentum, a growing community, and a shared commitment to help prepare the next generation of practitioners, educators and researchers.

This first impact report reflects what's possible when a network of thoughtful, passionate, and values-driven people come together to build something meaningful. U-PEP would not be where it is today without the dedication of our Leadership Team, the guidance of our consultants and Community Advisory Council, the trust and collaboration of our partner organizations, and the generosity of our donors. I am deeply grateful for the expertise, wisdom and energy that everyone has brought to this collaboration.

I'm especially proud of our incredible Faculty Fellows. Watching them as they start to bring psychedelic education into their classrooms and institutions - each with their own creativity, insight, and a deep sense of responsibility - is one of the most inspiring parts of this journey. Their courage to lead within academia, often in uncharted territory, motivates me every day.

While this report highlights many accomplishments, we know this is just the beginning. The need for ethical, inclusive, and scientifically grounded psychedelic education is urgent—and growing. As we look ahead, we remain guided by our values and filled with excitement about the future.

Thank you for being part of this community and for believing in U-PEP.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Sandy Samberg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sandy Samberg
Founder, University Psychedelic Education Program (U-PEP)

2025

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OUR VISION

The University Psychedelic Education Program (U-PEP) is

a philanthropically supported initiative that equips

university faculty across disciplines with the knowledge,

resources, and community to integrate evidence-based,

culturally responsive psychedelic education into curricula

- laying the groundwork for the next generation of

practitioners, researchers, and educators.



OUR WHY

Over the past few decades, scientific research has aimed to explore the therapeutic potential of various psychedelic compounds. The findings increasingly support the promise of psychedelics for addressing a range of difficult-to-treat mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and addiction. However, in order to ensure psychedelics are integrated into our healthcare system in a regulated, safe, and ethical manner, healthcare professionals (including physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and others) need evidence-based foundational education in psychedelic science. Recent research suggests that this is not yet happening. A 2024 study of over 700 registered nurses in Minnesota found that only 12.7% received psychedelic content in their training, with most expressing low confidence in their knowledge and ability to educate patients about potential psychedelic treatments. Likewise, findings from the Survey on Psychedelic Therapy Curricula in Academia found that 83% of surveyed academic leaders stated that there should be additional research into psychedelics as potential psychiatric treatments, but only 5% currently include psychedelic therapy content in required, graduate-level courses. Of note, a lack of qualified faculty was identified as a significant barrier to the inclusion of psychedelic content in curricula.

U-PEP is designed to fill this essential educational gap by equipping university faculty with the knowledge and resources they need to develop and integrate evidence-based, culturally responsive psychedelic content into their curricula.

U-PEP emerged from an innovative pilot program launched in 2022 at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University's Schools of Social Work and Nursing, which was made possible by the Steven & Alexandra Cohen and the Joe & Sandy Samberg Foundations. In partnership with the 1440 Foundation and several other key collaborators and funders, U-PEP is now replicating and scaling the pilot. In November 2024, U-PEP released a request for proposals and accepted 63 highly qualified nursing and social work faculty members from 30 universities in 22 states across the country, reflecting the rapidly growing interest among universities to engage with this content. The program is offered at no cost to participating universities, a vital aspect of U-PEP's mission to promote equitable access to psychedelic therapies for everyone who can benefit.

Porta, C. M., Weirick, M. E., Graefe, A., Harpin, S. B., & Dorsen, C. (2024). Nurses' Perceptions of Psychedelics to Address Mental Health Problems in the United States. *Psychedelic Medicine*, 2(3), 178-183.

Knepler, E., Smith II, R., Bautista, M., Blajszczak, E., Rosenbloom, R., Gebhardt, Z., and Pinkrah, L. (2024). Survey on Psychedelic Therapy Curricula in Academia. NORC at The University of Chicago in partnership with BrainFutures.

WHO WE ARE

LEADERSHIP



Sandy Samberg

Founder, U-PEP

Sandy Samberg earned her BSN & MSN from the University of Pennsylvania and worked as a nurse practitioner in New York City afterwards. Most recently, she founded a non-profit cancer support organization, SOUL RYEDERS. Helping individuals facing terminal illness inspired Sandy to deepen her knowledge about end-of-life care, leading her to explore the potential of psychedelic-assisted therapy to address anxiety and depression in those facing terminal diagnoses.

Sandy has since immersed herself in learning about the psychedelic ecosystem and identifying ways to create meaningful impact as a volunteer. Sandy co-developed *A Journey Through the Psychedelic Revival* learning series for Penn Nursing and a pilot faculty education initiative between the University of Pennsylvania & Columbia University's schools of nursing and social work. Building on the success of this pilot, she launched the University Psychedelic Education Program (U-PEP) to educate faculty members and help them create and integrate psychedelic content into their curriculum.

Through the charitable foundation that she and her husband established in 2008, Sandy supports several non-profits in the psychedelic field. She has particular interest in raising awareness about the history, promise and challenges of psychedelic-assisted care, educating university faculty members, promoting access, and fostering collaboration within the psychedelic community.



Julie McKay

Director, 1440 Foundation

Julie serves as the Director of Philanthropic Programs and Partnerships at the 1440 Foundation and 1440 Multiversity, where she leads efforts to advance the foundation's social initiatives and drive meaningful, positive change. With extensive experience in the nonprofit sector, Julie has spent years at the intersection of direct service, community engagement, and social justice, bringing a hands-on approach to her work.

In her role, Julie collaborates closely with mission-aligned organizations and foundations to address pressing social challenges, championing innovative partnerships that strengthen and empower communities. Her leadership is guided by a deep commitment to building more resilient and equitable societies through collaboration, thoughtful action, and sustainable impact.



Caroline Dorsen

Program Director, U-PEP

Caroline Dorsen is a nurse scholar, educator, and clinician whose passion is the intersection of health and social justice. She is the Program Director for the University Psychedelic Education Program (U-PEP) and Associate Dean for Clinical Faculty Affairs/ Clinical Professor at NYU Meyers College of Nursing. Caroline has published numerous papers on attitudes towards psychedelics and was an invited speaker at the 2022 National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine's (NASEM) workshop "Exploring Psychedelics and Entactogens as Treatments for Psychiatric Disorders".

Caroline received a BA in Anthropology from UC Berkeley, a BS in Nursing at NYU, a Master's degree at Yale, and a PhD in Nursing Research and Theory at NYU. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in translational science at NYU Langone Health. In recognition of her expertise as an educator, Caroline was the 2020 recipient of the Dean's Distinguished Teaching Award at NYU Meyers College of Nursing. In 2020, she was also the recipient of NYU's MLK, Jr Faculty Award sponsored by the President and Provost for "exemplifying the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through teaching excellence, leadership, social justice activism, and community building." At Rutgers, she received the "Beloved Community" Award in 2021 with colleagues from around the university for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in 2021.



Narda Skov

Program Coordinator, U-PEP

Narda Skov is the Program Coordinator for the University Psychedelic Education Program. With extensive experience in adolescent sexual health educator and curriculum development with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) she is excited to be part of a new initiative in the field of Psychedelic Assisted Therapy. Narda has spent the past thirty years working on the front lines of disease prevention and education with youth and young adults and is dedicated to giving back and ensuring that our youth have a healthy and positive future.

Narda also runs a small nonprofit that provides wigs for women undergoing chemotherapy or other hair loss related issues.

Narda received her BA from UCLA and her Masters in Public Health from Columbia University in New York City.

WHO WE ARE

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS



Jeremy Rudy
Sabba Collective
Founder & CEO



Juan Sanchez
Sabba Collective
Cofounder &
Head of Design



Maisie Coburn
Sabba Collective
Content Strategy



Wesley Hale
Usona Institute
Senior Manager of
Education and Training



Tura Patterson
Usona Institute
Senior Director Strategic
Partnerships

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS



Heidi Allen, PhD, LMSW
Columbia University
Social Work Consultant



Andrew Penn, PMHNP
UCSF
Nursing Consultant



Deborah Gardner
Beckley Academy
Curriculum Consultant



Janis Phelps, PhD
California Institute of Integral
Studies (CIIS)
Director of the Center for
Psychedelic Therapies

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL



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Psychiatric Mental Health
Nurse Practitioner



Jae Sevelius, PhD
Columbia University School of
Medicine / Psychology



Manish Agrawal, MD
Sunstone Therapies



Brooke Stott, LMSW
Columbia University
School of Social Work



Alyssa Draffin, MSW
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill School of
Social Work



Yasmin Alia Williams, MPH, MBA
Public Health Professional,
U-PEP Funder



Danielle Ompad, PhD
New York University School
of Public Health



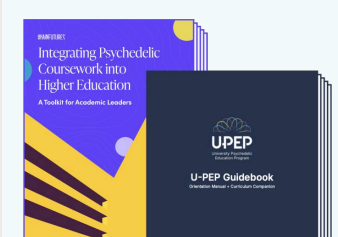
Mary "Bit" Yaden, MD
Johns Hopkins Medicine



Carolyn Porta, PhD, RN
University of Minnesota
School of Nursing

WHAT WE DO

Faculty fellows have access to the following resources



Introductory Toolkit & Guidebook

Welcome materials including program details, guidance for integrating psychedelic curriculum, and ideas for school-specific & inter-professional approaches.



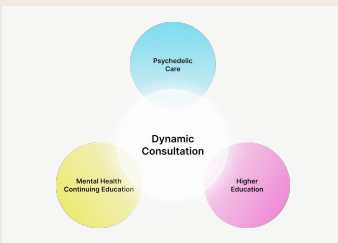
Faculty Education Program

Comprehensive 5-day program held at Usona Institute in Madison, Wisconsin. Blends didactic and experiential learning to foster professional development, personal growth, & community building.



Mentorship

Facilitated Mentor Circles where faculty refine psychedelic course drafts together-sharing ideas, exchanging feedback, and learning from experienced mentors and peers.



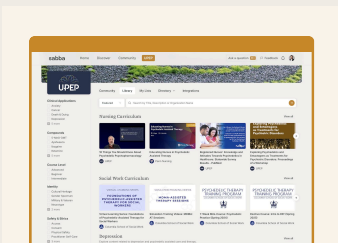
Curricular Consultation

Individualized consultation to help determine the optimal way to align content with specific program needs and goals.



Learning Collaborative

Quarterly opportunities to receive new and updated content, discuss challenges and opportunities, and engage with fellow educators. Includes annual 3-day retreat at 1440 Multiversity in Scotts Valley, CA.



Online Resource Hub (In partnership with Sabba)

The Online Resource Hub on Sabba includes a shared curriculum library, community area, AI companion, and a network of subject matter experts, supervisors, and practicum sites.

OUR GOALS

2024-2025

1

To develop and release an RFP for the first cohort of U-PEP Faculty Fellows and elicit applications from a least 20 Faculty Fellows from more than 10 states within first 3 months of U-PEP

2

To provide in-person and/or virtual evidence-based psychedelic education for at least 25 U-PEP Faculty Fellows within the first 12 months of the University Psychedelic Education Program (U-PEP)

3

To develop and launch an online, open access resource hub for psychedelic curricular content utilized by 50% of U-PEP Faculty Fellows within the first 12 months of U-PEP

4

To develop at least two “Top 10” videos for Faculty Fellows on essential issues related to psychedelic-assisted care

“

U-PEP might be the most strategic and impactful project in psychedelic science today. Nurses and social workers - those on the front lines of mental health - are now being educated in best practices for psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy as part of the core curriculum at more than 33 colleges and universities, including several HBCUs. As my grandfather loved to say, everyone said it couldn't be done, but the fool went ahead and did it anyway! Great work, Team U-PEP!

Robert Ansin · Healing Hearts, Changing Minds

A YEAR OF FIRSTS

YEAR ONE



OCT 2024
U-PEP Launch

NOV 2024
U-PEP Application Opens

JAN 2025
First Class of Faculty Fellow accepted

MAR 2025
First Meeting of Learning Collaborative

FEB 2025
First Meeting of Faculty Fellows



APR 2025
First Meeting of Community Advisory Council (CAC)

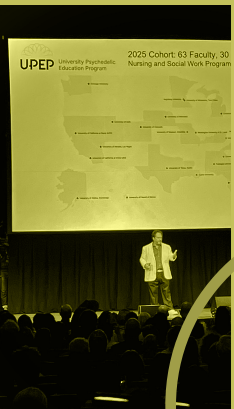
APR 2025
First Professional Presentation at Center for Holistic Interdisciplinary Research in Psychedelics (CHIRP) at Washington University in St. Louis



JUN 2025
Sabba Launch

JUN 2025
First Faculty Fellow Education Program at Usona

MAY 2025
First Set & Setting Gathering at 1440 Multiversity



JUN 2025
Psychedelic Science 2025 Presentation and Gathering



AUG 2025
Mentor Circles launching

SEP 15, 2025
Second Cohort Application Opens



OUR LEARNERS

FACULTY FELLOWS

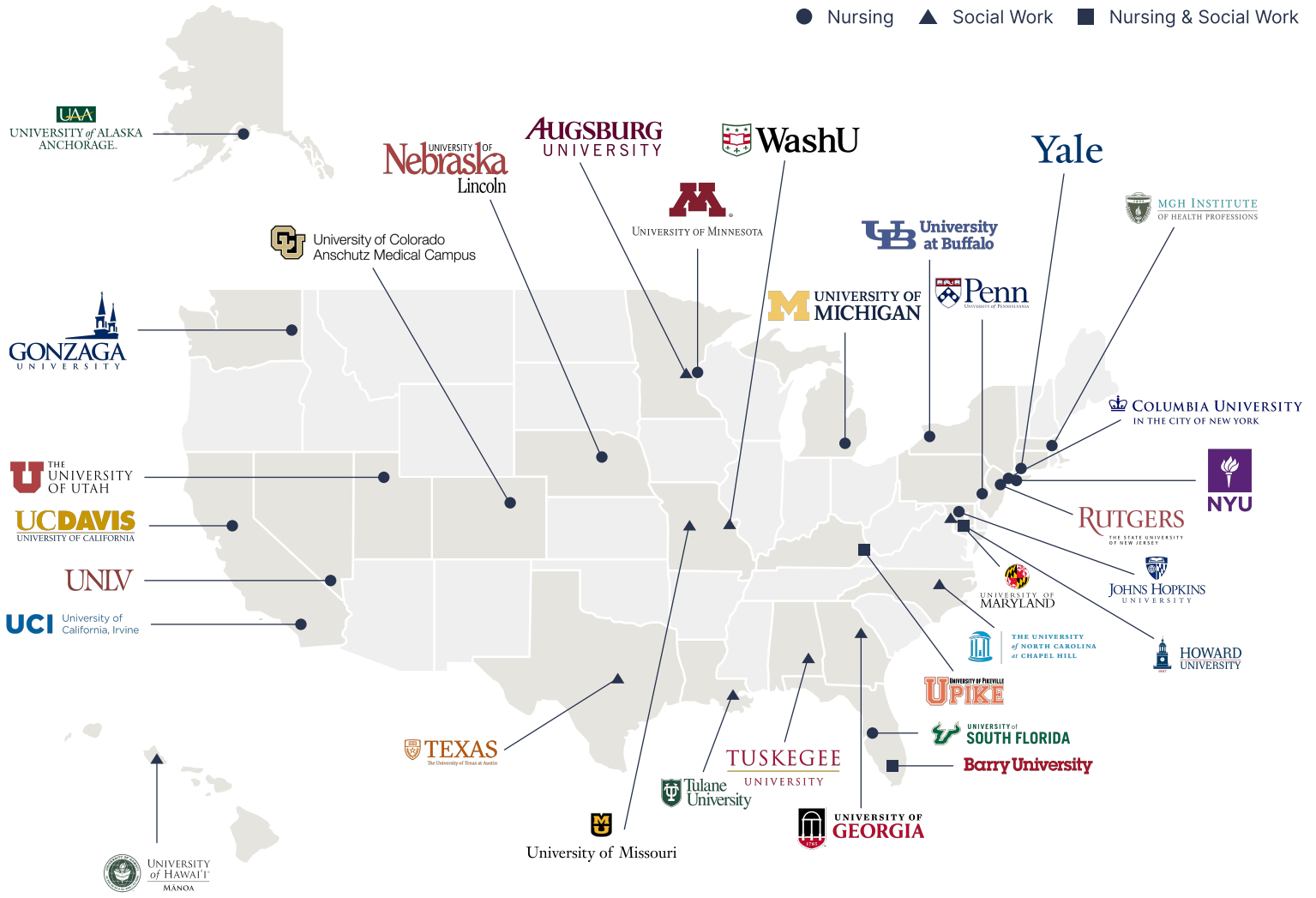
Sarah Hortsch, UMichigan • **Patricia Tillman-Meakins**, UMichigan • **Elizabeth Hopfenspirger**, UMinnesota Twin Cities • **Elena Geiger-Simpson**, UMinnesota Twin Cities • **Shane Gallagher**, NYU • **Dilice Robertson**, NYU • **Dorothy Wholihan**, NYU • **Shaquita Starks**, Johns Hopkins University • **Patty Wilson**, Johns Hopkins University • **Ashley Fenton**, Johns Hopkins University • **Nathan Levitt**, Yale • **Samantha Korbey**, Yale • **Christine Rodriguez**, Yale • **Carol Kottwitz**, Gonzaga University • **Amy Berg**, Gonzaga University • **Jeffery Ramirez**, Gonzaga University • **Zoe Spyralatos**, University of Buffalo NY • **Reimund Serafica**, UNLV • **Rhigel Tan**, UNLV • **Andrew Thomas Reyes**, UNLV • **Nick Gruenzel**, University of Nebraska • **Scott Harpin**, University of Colorado • **Jennifer Leiferman**, University of Colorado • **Kerry Peterson**, University of Colorado • **Christopher Cleary**, UC Irvine (Davis) • **Parker Robinson**, Tulane University • **John Cagle**, University of Maryland • **Michael DeMattos**, University of Hawaii • **Kelli Canada**, University of Missouri Columbia • **Danielle Easter**, University of Missouri Columbia • **Kate Morrissey-Stahl**, University of Georgia • **Christopher Weatherly**, University of Georgia • **Naynette Kennett**, University of Georgia • **Erin Sugrue**, Augsburg University • **Christopher Thyberg**, Augsburg University • **Tamara Blackledge Burr**, Tuskegee University • **Teresa Grear**, Tuskegee University • **April Jones**, Tuskegee University • **Janice Marie Davis**, Howard University • **Janice Berry Edwards**, Howard University • **Gloria Cain**, Howard University • **Vanessa Meade**, University of Alaska • **Jennifer Peeks**, University of Alaska • **Mikki Easley**, University of Alaska • **Genesia Kilgore-Bowling**, University of Pikeville KY • **Sarah Stratton**, University of Pikeville KY • **Kathryn Gould**, University of Pikeville KY • **Renee Krebel**, University of Pikeville KY • **Ryan Lindsay**, WashU of St Louis • **Eva Nowakowski-Sims**, Barry University • **Paul Czerwonka**, Barry University • **Robin Smith**, University of Texas Austin • **Orrin Ware**, UNC Chapel Hill • **Alyssa Draffin**, UNC Chapel Hill • **Judith Barberio**, Rutgers University • **Dianna Inman**, University South Florida (USF) • **Danielle Tometich**, University South Florida (USF) • **Uma Nair**, University South Florida (USF) • **Luana Colloca**, University of Maryland • **Meaghan Rudolph**, MGH Institute of Health Professionals • **Sarah Rossmassler**, MGH Institute of Health Professionals • **Franklin King**, MD (RN), Harvard (MGH) • **Ariel Richer**, University of Utah

LEARNING COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

Meagan Meyer, University of Maryland • **Tonya Edmond**, WashU • **Dani Adams**, University of Missouri Columbia • **Shoshana Aronowitz**, Penn • **Anita Iyengar**, Penn • **Amy Werman**, Columbia • **Kim McKay**, Penn • **Jerri Bourjolly**, Penn • **Kate Ledwith**, Penn • **Leopoldo Cabassa**, Brown SSW (WU) • **Dani Adams**, Brown SSW (WU) • **Angela Willits**, U of Wisconsin

Between our pilot and inaugural cohort, U-PEP has included:

63 FACULTY FELLOWS 33 UNIVERSITIES 22 STATES



As a region facing a complex and persistent mental health crisis - exacerbated by the opioid epidemic and the social challenges tied to poverty and isolation - the need for innovative and effective treatment options has never been more urgent.

Faculty Member, University of Pikeville, Kentucky

I love being a change agent for practice and advocacy! The emphasis on trauma informed clinical practice preparedness is needed more than ever.

Faculty Member, Howard University, Washington D.C.

I believe the U-PEP program aligns perfectly with our school's vision to be a leading source of high-impact research, evidence and education that will develop the knowledge and nurses necessary to address healthcare's biggest challenges and provide health for all.

Dean of Nursing, University of Michigan

BY THE NUMBERS

Our faculty fellows hail from around the US, teaching in small colleges, large public universities, religiously affiliated universities and HBCUs. Although the majority have experience creating curriculum, most rated themselves as beginner learners regarding psychedelic-assisted care.

Current Faculty Role

Multiple Choice • 77 Responses • 4 Empty

Clinical Faculty 52%

Research Faculty 26%

Administrative Role 12%

Other 4%

Program Director 1%

Practicum Coordinator 1%

Research Clinical 1%

Clinical Simulation 1%

Senior Lecturer 1%

Primary Profession

Multiple Choice • 62 Responses • 1 Empty

Nursing 48%

Social Work 47%

Public Health 4%

Physician 2%

Level of Knowledge Related to Psychedelics Prior to Fellowship

62 Responses • 1 Empty

Beginner 64%

Intermediate 31%

Advanced 5%

College or University Type

Multiple Choice • 70 Responses

Public 49%

Private 37%

HBCU 9%

Religious Affiliation 6%

Level of Knowledge of Creating Curriculum Prior to Fellowship

62 Responses • 1 Empty

Beginner 31%

Intermediate 38%

Advanced 31%

Did You Teach Any Content Related to Psychedelics Prior to Fellowship

64 Responses

No 52%

Somewhat 30%

Yes 19%

Approximate Number of Students in the the Program You Teach

63 Responses

Fewer than 50 Students 19%

50–100 Students 16%

101–250 Students 29%

251–500 Students 25%

More than 500 Students 11%

The U-PEP Faculty Education Program at Usona Institute occurred in June 2025, with more than 50 fellows. Many described the program as the most transformative event of their professional careers. Participants reported feeling empowered, safe, and motivated to implement best practices in their own institutions—testaments to the program’s unique ability to foster both personal and professional growth. Through immersive, evidence-based learning and heartfelt peer connection, participants gained confidence, insight, and a renewed commitment to healing practices.



The sense of collaboration, connection, and genuine community that emerged during my time at Usona is something I will carry with me, both in my professional practice and personal journey.

The U-PEP program has profoundly expanded my understanding of psychedelic-assisted therapy and its potential applications. I’m still thoughtfully processing the wealth of evidence-based content, personal insights, and expertise shared by the incredibly talented faculty and fellow participants.

When I arrived at the U-PEP Fellowship at Usona, I felt both nervous and humbled. My knowledge of psychedelic-assisted therapy was in its earliest stages, and I was aware that I had less experience than many of my colleagues. However, what I found was a deeply supportive, enriching, and transformative environment that far exceeded my expectations.

OUR FINANCES

OCTOBER 2024 – MAY 2025

Income	
Grants	580,000
Donations	245,000
Donations to Usona	332,769
Total Income	1,157,769
Expenses	
Consulting	81,827
Technology	350,000
Usona Faculty Education Program	282,117
Legal	2,650
Overhead	18,200
Total Expenses	734,794
Net Income	422,975

Current funding will support U-PEP through the end of 2025. To carry our momentum forward and meet the growing demand for our work, we're seeking mission-aligned philanthropic partners to help ensure the program's continued impact and sustainability.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS



Joe & Sandy Samberg
FOUNDATION



The Jervetson Foundation

THE
AUSTIN & GABRIELA
HEARST
FOUNDATION

Additional Supporters: Lauren & Suprotik Basu Family Foundation, Dayna West / West Family Foundation, Flourish Impact Fund, Blaire & Benno Dorer Foundation, Jeff Walker, PSFC, Alia & Eric Williams, Claudia & Carey Turnbull, Michael & Lisa Cotton, Sylvia Rzepniewski & Ford Smith, Dr. Bronner's

FORWARD

The path ahead for U-PEP is one of bold growth and expanded vision. In the coming year U-PEP will take the national stage presenting at major conferences to share our vision on the transformative power educating the next generation of health professionals in psychedelic-assisted care. On September 15, we will open applications for our second fellowship cohort, inviting a new wave of nursing and social work faculty to join this powerful community of change-makers. Most excitingly, we are expanding our reach to include other health professionals, building a more connected, compassionate, and interdisciplinary movement committed to healing and equity. The momentum is real—and we're just getting started!

To learn more about U-PEP, visit u pep.org or email info@u pep.org

