LIFT is a student led initiative at the University of Rochester School of Nursing (URSON) designed to provide a platform for students to enhance their learning in the areas of diversity, leadership and advocacy. The goal is to increase the number of graduates with a skill set that fosters sensitivity to underrepresented populations; increase the number of graduates who have garnered skills necessary for leadership roles in the workplace; teach students how to effectively advocate for themselves and ultimately, their patients; and promote an environment of inclusion at the School of Nursing.

In addition, this initiative is an avenue for current and former nursing students to connect with each other and embrace the “Each one, Teach one” philosophy. Students have an opportunity to share their experiences and strategies for success with the hope of supporting and empowering one another.

LIFT is currently led by a small group of student champions (Victor Hernandez, Nasim Hurd, Ryan Houghtalen, Jeremy Mack, Sarah Miner, Nikki Robinson, and Jeannette Sampson) that are responsible for planning and coordinating events consistent with the goals of LIFT for this academic year, such as guest speakers on leadership and advocacy; discussions on interacting with patients with disabilities and of unique diversities; “safe zone training” for students; and managing conflict and micro-aggressions. The advisory panel consists of Ulandus Powell Quinn and three former University of Rochester nursing students, who now serve as faculty at the School of Nursing: Yvette Conyers, MSN, RN, FNP; Orlando Harris, Ph.D., MS, RN, APRN, FNP and Mitchell Wharton, Ph.D., RN, FNP, CNS. Kathy Rideout, Dean of the School of Nursing also serves on the LIFT advisory panel and has demonstrated unyielding support for this initiative – including allocating financial resources for LIFT. In addition, the URSON faculty and staff continue to generously offer their time and expertise to LIFT, which is a testament to their commitment to the profession of nursing and the students at URSON.

If you are interested in learning more information about LIFT, please contact Nikki Robinson at Neacol_Robinson@URMC.Rochester.edu.