The RNA StARs program is designed to attract underrepresented minorities (URM) to STEM fields, with the goal of increasing the diversity of graduate RNA Fellows in the Departments of Biology, Chemistry and Biomedical Sciences. High-impact, enriched summer research opportunities for URM students will help retain current UAlbany STEM undergraduates for graduate studies. This approach will be coupled with recruitment activities targeted at bringing outside URM students to the RNA Symposium, a showcase UAlbany event, and using faculty talks at URM colleges and universities to develop a new pipeline of URM STEM students to UAlbany.

The RNA StARs program consists of three main activities:

- **RNA Institute Undergraduate Summer Fellowship (Activity 1)**  
  The RNA Institute will offer competitive summer fellowships for undergraduate students interested in pursuing interdisciplinary research in RNA Institute faculty laboratories. Students will receive a stipend and pursue research full time for a significant portion of the summer. Program funds will be focused on the recruitment of URM undergraduate students from UAlbany and outside institutions.

- **RNA Faculty & Fellows Science Talks at CUNY (Activity 2)**  
  RNA Institute faculty and RNA Fellows (advanced graduate students) will travel to City University of New York (CUNY) Colleges that have a high number of URM students to present science recruitment seminars.

- **RNA Symposium Diversity Program (Activity 3)**  
  The RNA Institute Annual Symposium is a UAlbany showcase event of student and faculty research that has attracted Nobel Laureates and industry experts. Program funds will be used towards registration, travel, and lodging for twenty five URM undergraduates to attend the RNA symposium who will be encouraged to apply to UAlbany STEM graduate programs.

The RNA StARs program will help attract under-represented groups to STEM fields, and the RNA Institute in particular. Using a targeted approach and scientific metrics of success, we will provide critical data on attracting URM students to the STEM field. If successful at the RNA Institute, this approach may prove useful for other UAlbany STEM programs, and in the future we envision creating a network of similar programs to help attract the brightest StARs to the RNA Institute, UAlbany and the entire SUNY network.