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## Science Families at the University of Florida

Randy Duran and his 11-year-old daughter Sophie are both reading the Harry Potter series (although she's a couple of books ahead of him). "I think it's great that we can share this," he said. "It's like a partnership."

Duran's new HHMI-supported science education program at the University of Florida, *Science for Life*, is another kind of partnership across generations. The HHMI award will bring together undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members to teach and learn from each other.

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— **Randy Duran**

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The university in Gainesville, Florida, is the fifth largest public university in the country, with more than 49,600 students. "We have large incoming freshman classes," said Duran, an associate professor of chemistry and director of *Science for Life*. "We want to target the very talented students who otherwise might get lost in the system."

The university will use its new \$1.5 million grant to create the HHMI Undergraduate Core Laboratory, more than 2,000 square feet of renovated space in its Health Center Complex. The facility will be devoted to cross-disciplinary teaching and laboratory work.

The core lab will have something for everyone from freshmen through postdoctoral fellows. *Science for Life* will fund 70 to 100 HHMI freshman research awards annually. "We aim to motivate them as freshmen and sustain that start so they'll keep on doing research," said Duran. Freshmen will learn interdisciplinary research early in the core lab and quickly move on to conduct independent research projects mentored by graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members campus-wide.

The graduate student mentors will be eligible for a newly established graduate course in teaching and mentoring, as well as merit awards supported by the HHMI program.

The grant has also enabled the university to establish a teaching postdoctoral fellow program in collaboration with Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. "We're partnering with a historically black college and a primarily undergraduate institution because Morehouse provides a very good, diverse, nurturing atmosphere for learning about mentoring and teaching," Duran explained.

Postdoctoral fellows will teach in the HHMI Core Lab and work on collaborative research projects, spending a year teaching and doing research at each institution. They will receive additional mentoring from Catherine Emihovich, dean of the University of Florida's College of Education. "This background will give them experience in teaching, mentoring, and research at both undergraduate and research-intensive institutions," said Duran. Typically, postdoctoral fellows conduct research at one institution and rarely receive training in teaching or mentoring.

When the teaching postdocs sign on as new faculty members at any college or university, the University of Florida will pay each \$20,000. Duran hopes that this facet of the program will motivate more well-trained scientists to consider mentoring and teaching.

Both the University of Florida and Morehouse also will award "HHMI term professorships" to at least 27 current faculty members who demonstrate excellent mentoring skills. The awards of \$10,000 over a two-year period can be spent at the faculty member's discretion.

"We polled faculty members in the life sciences and found at least 150 people in 49 departments, including recently appointed HHMI professor Lou Guillette, who are enthusiastic about serving as mentors," said Duran. Each faculty member will mentor undergraduates, graduates and postdoctoral students, creating multi-generational science families.