

JUNE 29, 1999

New Graduate Program Awards

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute has awarded 165 fellowships to enable some of the world's most talented young scientists to receive advanced training in biomedical research.

Eighty-seven of the fellowships are five-year awards for graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees in the biological sciences. The other 78 fellowships will enable medical students to take a year off from their medical studies to pursue research full time, or to resume their medical studies after a year of research.

"It is gratifying to note the continuing strength of interest in biomedical research among these outstanding graduate students and medical students," said HHMI President Purnell W. Choppin. "As the fellows pursue their training with superb mentors in excellent university and medical school departments, the HHMI awards will help place them firmly on the path to important discoveries in the future."

HHMI, one of the nation's largest philanthropies, now supports 500 students at 74 academic institutions through these two programs. A third fellowship program enables physicians with clinical experience to receive training in basic research for three years. Through fiscal year 1999 HHMI has awarded \$200 million in fellowship support to 2,000 outstanding students and physician scientists.

"The fellows have identified challenging and far-reaching areas of research in which to immerse themselves," said Joseph G. Perpich, HHMI's vice president for grants and special programs. "The topics extend across such fundamental issues as the workings of biological clocks and how ion channel structure and function relates to nerve cell actions, as well as the pathogenesis and treatment of devastating health problems such as Alzheimer's disease and cancer. We look forward to learning about their findings, through progress reports and fellows' meetings."

Information about fellows, their research, and the fellowship programs is available on the World Wide Web at www.hhmi.org/fellowships.

Predoctoral Fellowships in Biological Sciences

The Predoctoral Fellowships in Biological Sciences support students for up to five years while they pursue full-time study toward a Ph.D. or Sc.D. degree. The program now supports 393 predoctoral students at an annual cost of more than \$12 million.

Each predoctoral award includes annually a \$16,000 stipend and a \$15,000 cost-of-education allowance, which goes to the fellowship institution. Eligible fields include biochemistry, bioinformatics, biophysics, biostatistics, cell biology, developmental biology, epidemiology, genetics, immunology, mathematical and computational biology, microbiology, molecular biology, neuroscience, pharmacology, physiology, structural biology, and virology. This year's 87 new fellows, including 47 men and 40 women, are planning graduate study at 29 academic institutions in the United States, 2 in the United Kingdom, and 1 in Germany. Six of the fellows are from minority groups underrepresented in the sciences. The group includes 72 U.S. citizens and 4 fellows from Canada, 3 from the People's Republic of China, and 1 each from Argentina, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Japan, Russia, and Singapore.

Research Training Fellowships for Medical Students

The Research Training Fellowships for Medical Students will enable 60 medical students to conduct biomedical research full time in a laboratory of their choice for one year. The 43 men and 17 women selected this year will study at 28 institutions. Six of the fellows are from minority groups underrepresented in the sciences. Each \$27,000 award includes a \$16,000 stipend, a \$5,500 research allowance, and a \$5,500 allowance to the fellowship institution.

In addition to these new fellowships to medical students for a research year, HHMI also announced that it would provide continued support to 12 men and 6 women who were fellows during the past year. The 18 continued fellows are returning to school to complete their medical studies and will receive a stipend and education allowance totaling \$31,000 each year for up to two years. Later this year, additional awards for continued support will be made to medical students in the HHMI-NIH Research Scholars program, bringing the overall medical student fellowship program to an annual level of more than \$3 million.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute employs scientists in cell biology, genetics, immunology, neuroscience, and structural biology. More than 320 Hughes investigators conduct medical research in HHMI laboratories at 71 outstanding academic medical centers and universities nationwide. Through its complementary grants program, HHMI also supports science education in the United States and a select group of researchers abroad.