

JUNE 30, 2005

## Medical Students Win HHMI Research Awards

More than 100 students from 40 medical schools and one dental school across the United States will spend their next academic year learning what it's like to do medical research. They are recipients of approximately \$3.7 million in new research fellowships and awards from Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI).

HHMI runs two programs designed to interest medical and dental students in becoming physician-scientists. Both programs enable the students to take a year off from medical school to do mentored research.

This year, 66 medical students received HHMI research training fellowships, which they will use at medical research centers nationwide. Another 42 medical and dental students were accepted as HHMI-NIH research scholars. They will live and work on the campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, where HHMI's research scholars program is based at a historic building informally known as the Cloister.

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**- William Galey**

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"Physician-scientists are essential to the advancement of medical research," said William Galey, graduate science education program director at HHMI. "Such individuals are aware of the pressing problems in medicine, so they are in a unique position to help translate new basic science discoveries into treatments for disease."

This year 364 students from 91 medical and dental schools applied for the research opportunities. Women comprise 38 percent of the research scholars and 35 percent of those receiving fellowships. Minorities underrepresented in the sciences account for 24 percent of the research scholars and eight percent of the fellows. Fields of research interest range widely, with a majority choosing cell or molecular biology, genetics, immunology, and neuroscience.

Since the Institute's research programs for medical students began in 1985, HHMI has supported research training for nearly 1,000 medical student fellows and more than 800 research scholars, many of whom have gone on to make contributions to bridging the gap between laboratory science and medicine. For example, Dr. Joseph Vinetz, an HHMI-NIH Cloister scholar in 1988, is now an associate professor at the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine, where he conducts research from bench to bedside on tropical infectious diseases. He takes a comprehensive approach, studying the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying transmission and doing field work among infected populations in Peru. Vinetz has served on three review panels for HHMI international research scholar competitions.

The 2005 research scholars and fellows are: