

SEPTEMBER 16, 1998

HHMI Awards \$91.1 Million For Undergraduate Science Education At 58 Universities

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) announced today that it will award \$91.1 million in four-year grants to help 58 research and doctoral universities strengthen their undergraduate education programs in the biological sciences.

The grants, which range between \$1.2 million and \$2.2 million, bring to more than \$425 million the amount awarded since 1988 through HHMI's undergraduate grants program, the largest private initiative in U.S. history to enhance undergraduate science education nationwide. The universities will use the grants to expand research opportunities for undergraduates, update science courses and curricula, attract new faculty in emerging fields of science, and modernize laboratories through new scientific equipment and technology. Many will also expand their science outreach programs with nearby schools and community colleges.

"The Institute's undergraduate grants program, which is now entering its second decade, is having a major impact on how biology and related disciplines are taught at the college level," said Purnell W. Choppin, president of the Institute. "Large numbers of students are getting involved in original research projects such as exploring genetic databases on the Internet, examining how the brain functions and helping to determine the structures of biologically important molecules involved in AIDS and other diseases. In short, they're experiencing for themselves why biology is so exciting and important. It's an experience that will serve them well even if they decide to pursue careers in other fields."

Proposals were invited from 205 research and doctoral universities. The 191 proposals received were reviewed by a panel of distinguished scientists and educators to provide guidance to HHMI's staff, which submitted a recommended list of awards to the Institute's Trustees for their approval. This is the eighth round of grants awarded since the program began in 1988, and the fourth for research and doctoral universities. The other rounds have focused on liberal arts and master's degree-granting institutions, including historically black colleges and women's colleges.

The 58 universities receiving grants are located in 32 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. They include 54 institutions that have previously received grants under HHMI's undergraduate program. The four new institutions are Clemson University, Northern Arizona State University, the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and the University of Montana.

Since 1988, a total of 224 institutions has successfully competed for grants under HHMI's undergraduate biological sciences education program, which is helping to change the way science is taught nationwide not only at the undergraduate level, but also at thousands of K-12 schools that benefit from teacher training programs, student science camps, mentoring programs and other outreach activities. Many of the grants also support outreach programs with community colleges, historically black colleges and other undergraduate institutions.

Among the accomplishments of the HHMI program since 1988 are the following:

More than 30,000 undergraduates have been involved in scientific research. More than 5,500 courses covering diverse fields of biology and other disciplines have been developed or revised. More than 250 science faculty members have been appointed. More than 89,000 elementary, middle and high school students and more than 32,000 precollege teachers have participated in outreach programs.

"Ten years of HHMI's grants have helped change how a generation of American college students learns about the life sciences," said Joseph G. Perpich, HHMI's vice president for grants and special programs. "Young people are getting to work on research projects in areas such as molecular, cell and computational biology, and they're using the latest technology in both the laboratory and the classroom. Biology, like the information sciences, is advancing at incredible speed these days, and it's essential that undergraduate education keep pace."

The undergraduate program is the largest of HHMI's grants initiative. Altogether, HHMI has awarded more than \$700 million in grants since 1988, primarily to enhance science education at all levels within the United States. More information is available on HHMI's Web site, <http://www.hhmi.org>.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute is a medical research organization whose principal purpose is the conduct of biomedical research. It employs scientists in cell biology, genetics, immunology, neuroscience and structural biology. More than 330 Hughes investigators conduct medical research in HHMI laboratories at 72 outstanding academic medical centers and universities nationwide. Through its complementary grants program, HHMI supports science education in the United States and a select group of researchers abroad.

HHMI Undergraduate Biological Sciences Education Grants: 1998 Awardees