

SEA Reaches New Shores

HHMI'S SCIENCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERS.

HHMI HAS SELECTED A DIVERSE GROUP OF 12 colleges and universities to become part of its Science Education Alliance (SEA). The institutions will join 36 other schools in offering a year-long course that gives first-year students the opportunity to do sophisticated, hands-on research.

The 12 new alliance members include large research universities and small colleges from urban centers and rural towns. Another 14 schools—including a consortium of four Maine colleges—will join SEA as associate members. Faculty from associate member schools, like those at full-member institutions, will attend training sessions to implement the phage course but have the option of offering students an abbreviated version. Director Tuajuanda Jordan is excited that the initiative will now reach students in 29 states and Puerto Rico. “The SEA tide continues to roll.”

The course, called the National Genomics Research Initiative (NGRI), is taught in

two parts. In the first part, students isolate bacterial viruses, called phage, from local soil samples, purify them, and extract their DNA. In the second part, the students use bioinformatics techniques to analyze the phage's genome. So far, almost 1,700 students have participated in the NGRI course at 39 schools. During the first two years, the students sequenced and annotated 37 phage and then deposited the data in the national GenBank database. Another 50 are expected to be completed this year, Jordan says.

“This experience makes excellent students that much more excited, and it makes students who weren't sure about their level of interest in the life sciences a lot more engaged,” says Sean B. Carroll, HHMI's vice president for science education.

The new group will go through training in the coming months and will offer the NGRI course in classrooms beginning in the fall of 2011. ■

2011 SCIENCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE MEMBERS

BROWN UNIVERSITY Providence, RI
CARTHAGE COLLEGE Kenosha, WI
COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA Duluth, MN
GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE Lawrenceville, GA
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY Baltimore, MD
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY Montclair, NJ
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY Columbus, OH
OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY Arkadelphia, AR
SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY New Haven, CT
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA Gainesville, FL
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY Pullman, WA
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA New Orleans, LA

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

DEL MAR COLLEGE Corpus Christi, TX
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE Gettysburg, PA
HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE Hampden-Sydney, WV
ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY Bloomington, IL
MIAMI UNIVERSITY Oxford, OH
MOREHOUSE COLLEGE Atlanta, GA
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY Stillwater, OK
PROVIDENCE COLLEGE Providence, RI
SMITH COLLEGE Northampton, MA
SOUTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE South Portland, ME
TRINITY COLLEGE Hartford, CT
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE HONORS COLLEGE Orono, ME
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE at Fort Kent, ME
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE at Machias, ME

HHMI Launches International Competition for Early Career Scientists

HHMI OPENED AN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION IN DECEMBER aimed at helping up to 35 early career scientists establish independent research programs. Scientists trained in the United States who are now running a lab in any eligible country may apply.

“Science is an international endeavor,” says HHMI President Robert Tjian, “and HHMI wants to help develop the next generation of scientific talent worldwide.”

HHMI has committed \$24 million for the International Early Career Scientist Program. Each selected scientist will receive \$650,000 over five years, with eligibility for a five-year extension of the grant. The competition is open to scientists who have trained in the United States at the graduate, medical, or postdoctoral level; have run their own labs for fewer than seven years; and work on biomedical research in a university or nonprofit research institution in one of 18 eligible countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Hungary, India, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and Turkey.

The program will complement HHMI's 2008 initiative supporting 50 early career scientists in the United States. Early career support can be even more important internationally, because many scientists working outside the United States do not receive the large startup packages available at many U.S. universities. If the program is

successful, it could form the basis for a larger international endeavor.

“HHMI's investigators are deeply involved in the international research community, and we want to make sure that community is as robust as possible,” says HHMI vice president and chief scientific officer Jack E. Dixon. Since 1991, HHMI has spent more than \$145 million to fund international scientists working in specific geographic areas, including Canada, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, or in a specific field of research, such as parasitology or infectious disease.

In a June survey of HHMI investigators and early career scientists, 73 percent of those who responded reported international collaborations and 62 percent said they have international postdoctoral students in their laboratories.

The competition is open until February 23, 2011. Interested scientists can submit their applications on HHMI's website, www.hhmi.org/research/application/iecs2011. Panels of distinguished biomedical researchers will evaluate the applications; finalists will be invited to give a presentation on their work at HHMI's Janelia Farm Research Campus in November 2011. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION: To learn more about the International Early Career Scientist Program, visit www.hhmi.org/research/competitions.
