



UIW Research Scholars Program

Award #2008-38422-19438
\$283,819

The Research Scholars Program will address the second USDA HSI Education Priority Need Area which is to attract and support underrepresented students to prepare them to work in agriculture-related careers. The project will also support the USDA's Educational Need Area F: "Student Recruitment and Retention" under the discipline of mathematical sciences.

The Research Scholars Program will collaborate its efforts with the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The Research Scholars Program objectives include:

- ▲ Recruit and select 11 underrepresented or low-income students into the Research Scholars Program.
- ▲ Retain 80% of RSP Scholars through to graduation with a Master's degree in Research Statistics.
- ▲ Place 60% of the Research Scholars in an internship with local businesses or government agencies.

Activities for the program include:

- ▲ Recruit local students completing a Bachelor's degree in a relevant field.
- ▲ Recruit students from area universities through UIW graduate school information sessions.
- ▲ Recruit scholars through local advertising.
- ▲ Provide information sessions for prospective applicants that include a campus visit and meetings with the admissions and financial aid officers.
- ▲ Assign each RSP Scholar to an advisor who will serve as their Faculty Mentor.
- ▲ Provide study sessions twice per week.
- ▲ Provide career seminars once per semester.
- ▲ Provide financial aid.
- ▲ Provide transportation and expenses for scholars to attend state research and statistics conferences.
- ▲ Provide faculty development.
- ▲ Increase student interest by integrating data from various disciplines.
- ▲ Cultivate student-professional mentoring partnerships.
- ▲ Host a meeting for recruiters from relevant enterprises and agencies to introduce the RSP.
- ▲ Identify businesses and government agencies for research scholar internships.
- ▲ Work with Career Services to build a network with local Human Resources personnel for internships and Scholar career placement upon graduation.
- ▲ Invite representatives from local companies or government agencies to speak at career development sessions.

Benefits from the Research Scholars Program include:

- ▲ Alleviate barriers that prevent qualified underrepresented and low-income people from enrolling in and completing a graduate program and
- ▲ Enlarge the pool of research statisticians for the local and national workforce.

Two major components comprise the comprehensive evaluation design:

- ▲ The formative evaluation will describe and assess what transpired in the project – the activities planned, the activities implemented, and the participants involved.
- ▲ The summative evaluation will assess the progress made in achieving the objectives of the planning process including the accomplishment of all activities.

Expected Impact: By attracting and retaining these students a larger pool of well-qualified underrepresented and low-income students will be leave the university as research statisticians who are well prepared to enter the workforce.