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ECU Uses Half Million NSF Grant to Award First 10 Chemistry Physics Scholarships

GREENVILLE, N.C. (July 23, 2014) — This past spring, East Carolina University’s Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences received a $620,884 grant from the National Science Foundation to support financial need based chemistry and physics scholarships. Under the direction of Drs. Allison S. Danell, Anthony M. Kennedy and Anne Marie Spuches from chemistry, and Drs. Regina DeWitt and John M. Kenney from physics, “The Chemistry and Physics Scholarship Program” was developed. The program provides higher education access to students with solid academic preparation and who have the potential to succeed in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

This fall, the program is proud to announce it has awarded scholarships in the amount of $5,000 to 10 incoming ECU freshman chemistry and physics majors. Recipients of the 2014-15 Chemistry and Physics Scholarship are Lauren Ackerman, chemistry major from Trent Woods, NC; Mary Becker, chemistry major from Black Mountain, NC; Rahel Haile, chemistry major from Charlotte, NC; Roderick Hall, physics major from Riegelwood, NC; Jahmil James, chemistry major from Fayetteville, NC; Mitul Patel, chemistry major from Hendersonville, NC; Sophia Pena, chemistry major from Hope Mills, NC; Fabricio Sanchez, chemistry major from Matthews, NC; Timothy Sault, physics major from Cary, NC; and Nouci Vue, chemistry major from Connelly Springs, NC.

For the next two years, each scholarship recipient will live in the Chemistry and Physics Living Learning Community. The LLC, housed in the same residence hall as the ECU Honors LLC and Bio-Excellence LLC, is an area of the dorms dedicated to the science majors who will live together, take classes together and participate in other special activities as a group.

“The Living Learning Community, which forms the backbone of the funded NSF proposal, will be enriched by the presence of first generation college students and will continue to provide rewards to ECU beyond the funding period,” said Allison Danell, interim chair of the Department of Chemistry. “The students we educate and mentor will share their experiences, encouraging many more young scientists to pursue an education in scientific disciplines, which will provide a strong foundation for innovation and economic development not just regionally but nationally.”

The students’ interactions with other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars will provide them with a unique perspective on the role of other disciplines in STEM. Scholars will be encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to local and regional science activities, thereby instilling a sense of civic responsibility and awareness.
The overall goals of the scholarship program are increased retention in STEM, shorter average time to graduation and higher GPAs.

Scholarship recipients also may qualify for up to $10,000 in additional scholarship money during their sophomore, junior and senior years, which totals $35,000 in funds over their four years at ECU.

Incoming ECU freshman that intend to major in chemistry or physics, and who are interested in applying for one of the 2015-16 scholarships, should contact Anthony Kennedy for additional information at 252-328-9816 or kennedyan@ecu.edu.

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