



News Release

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S-STEM Grant Provides \$100,000 in Math, Science Scholarships

HOUSTON (Jan. 8, 2010) The National Science Foundation has awarded the University of St. Thomas a \$575,000 grant to provide scholarships to undergraduate students obtaining degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) over the next five years.

The program will provide \$100,000 in scholarships each year to approximately 25 STEM students, excluding pre-health majors. These scholarships will support an estimated 125 students over the five year period. The first scholarships will be awarded for the fall 2010 semester.

This program, dubbed The University of St. Thomas S-STEM Scholars Program seeks to increase the number of students graduating in the fields of science, pre-engineering and mathematics. UST aims to reach the diverse communities in the Houston area, and to recruit women and underrepresented groups to the STEM fields. Using successful models established by UST, retention and academic success will be increased among students, particularly first-time college freshmen.

“The National Science Foundation’s support will directly help more students obtain a University of St. Thomas degree in the STEM areas,” said Dr. Michelle Steiger, program director and assistant professor of chemistry. Dr. Maia Larios-Sanz, assistant professor of biology and Dr. Sheila Waggoner, mathematics chair, will assist Steiger in program implementation.

Through the S-STEM Scholars Program, students will receive mentoring from senior-level STEM students, career counseling and a hands-on undergraduate research experience. All S-STEM scholars will also have the opportunity to conduct outreach events to high school students at several Houston Independent School District science magnet schools.

“The goal of this S-STEM awareness campaign in high schools is to increase the number of students enrolling in STEM fields at the college-level by providing role models and information about the vast career opportunities that a STEM degree provides to underrepresented students,” Steiger said.

All S-STEM scholars will interact with professionals in the STEM fields by visiting laboratory environments, attending professional society meetings and attending guest lectures. All program participants will have access to student counseling, financial aid, tutoring and other student support services to help ensure their success.