



Alfred P. Sloan FOUNDATION

630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2200
New York, NY 10111
212.649.1649 | 212.757.5117 (fax)
www.sloan.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2015

Contact: Nate Williams, 212-649-1692
williams@sloan.org

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to Create Three New University Centers of Exemplary Mentoring

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California, San Diego, and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign join national network to support Ph.D. students in STEM

(New York, NY) - The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation announces that its Minority Ph.D. (MPHD) Program is expanding to partner with three new institutions: the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; University of California, San Diego; and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in a three-year, multi-million-dollar initiative to support underrepresented minority graduate students in STEM fields. Each new partner institution will create a University Center of Exemplary Mentoring (UCEM), a campus-wide center that will provide scholarships to minority doctoral students in the physical and mathematical sciences and engineering, and coordinate a host of activities designed to help students succeed in their graduate studies, including faculty and peer mentoring, research opportunities, workshops and seminars, and professional development. The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation will make grants totaling almost \$3 million to these three institutions, most of which will provide funds for student scholarships and stipends. In addition to Sloan funds, the universities have committed to substantial cost-sharing in the forms of direct support to students, program activities, and the personnel costs of running the program. Combining Sloan and university funds, 122 minority graduate students will receive tuition, stipend, and professional development support through the new UCEMs over the next three years.

“Increasing the diversity of graduate education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering means getting talented minority candidates into quality Ph.D. programs and helping them succeed once they get there,” says Elizabeth S. Boylan, Director of the STEM Higher Education program at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. “UCEMs are designed to support graduate students at every point in the graduate study pipeline. Through participation in the MPHD network, faculty and administrators at these highly-committed institutions can share the best institutional practices for recruiting and mentoring minority graduate students.”

Selected through a competitive search, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; University of California, San Diego; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign were chosen to participate in the UCEM initiative based on a number of criteria, including their historical success in recruiting and mentoring graduate students from underrepresented minorities; the quality of the departments and programs constituting the UCEM; the quality, breadth, and creativity of their planned future activities; and the strength of their institutional commitment to furthering education for underrepresented minorities in the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Each winning institution provided extensive data on past minority recruitment, retention, and graduation outcomes which they then used to set concrete, ambitious targets for improvement.

“These universities really stand out for the depth of their commitment to minority Ph.D. students in the sciences and engineering,” says Boylan. “From recruitment, to mentoring, to building supportive communities, to post-Ph.D. placement support, each of these universities is passionately committed to doing whatever it takes to make sure their students succeed.”

About each new UCEM:

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Based in its world renowned school of engineering, MIT’s program aims to double the number of minority PhD students training to become biological, chemical, electrical, and mechanical engineers and computer scientists. MIT’s program will build off its successful graduate training and preparation initiatives, including the expansion of its Summer Research Program, which invites talented undergraduates to spend the summer preparing for graduate work, and its Converge workshop, an intensive four-day preparatory weekend aimed at successfully introducing new students to graduate study at MIT.

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Composed of 12 departments from its College of Engineering and 6 from its College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the UCEM at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign aims to double the number of applications, offers, and enrollments of underrepresented minority students in STEM fields. In addition to providing tuition and stipend support, funded support activities at Urbana-Champaign include an extensive orientation program for entering students and an innovative three-tiered mentoring program, providing peer, academic, and research mentors to students.

University of California, San Diego

The University of California, San Diego is implementing ambitious campus-wide reforms aimed at ensuring that one of every five applications, offers, and acceptances to their graduate programs in engineering and physical sciences comes from a minority scholar. In addition to significant fellowship and tuition support, UC San Diego plans to engage in an aggressive recruitment campaign and provide a host of services to entering students, including guest lectures, networking mixers, a one-month orientation for newly admitted students, and a peer mentoring program that matches new students with more-advanced colleagues.

The creation of UCEMs at MIT, UC-San Diego, and UI-Urbana-Champaign brings the total number of UCEMs across the U.S. to eight. Previous Alfred P. Sloan Foundation MPhD grants in excess of \$4.7 million supported the creation of UCEMs at Cornell University, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Iowa, Pennsylvania State University, and University of South Florida.

The MPhD effort is part a nationwide initiative by the Sloan Foundation to diversify graduate education in STEM fields by investing in financial support to students along with high-quality mentoring practices at institutions sharing the Foundation’s high aspirations and expectations for success. Students eligible for support self-identify as African American/black, Hispanic/Latino/a, and/or American Indian/Alaska Native. The Foundation also supports the [Sloan Indigenous Graduate Partnership](#) (SIGP) that targets American Indian/Alaska Native master’s and doctoral students at select institutions in Alaska, Arizona, Indiana, and Montana.

* * *

The **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation** is a philanthropic, not-for-profit grantmaking institution based in New York City. Established in 1934 by Alfred Pritchard Sloan Jr., then-President and Chief Executive Officer of General Motors, the Foundation makes grants in support of original research and education in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics. This grant was made through the Foundation’s STEM Higher Education program area, which aims to increase the quality and diversity of higher education in STEM fields.