NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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Dear Colleague Letter: Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites Supplemental Funding for Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (S-STEM) Scholars in Computer and Information Science and Engineering

February 16, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorates for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) and Education and Human Resources (EHR) invite active CISE Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites to submit requests for supplements to support collaborative efforts with NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (S-STEM) awardees. In particular, these REU Sites supplemental funding requests are intended to provide research experiences for S-STEM scholars.

BACKGROUND

A well-educated science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce is critical to maintaining the competitiveness of the U.S. in the global economy, yet there continues to be high attrition among STEM undergraduate students across U.S. colleges and universities[1]. The NSF S-STEM program addresses the need for a high-quality STEM workforce in STEM disciplines supported by the program by providing scholarships to low-income, academically-talented students with demonstrated financial need who are pursuing associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degrees in these disciplines. High-impact educational practices, such as undergraduate research experiences and learning communities, have been shown to be successful in increasing undergraduate student retention rates and student engagement [2] [3] . For that reason, this DCL encourages active REU Site awardees to partner with S-STEM awardees to provide productive summer research experiences for undergraduates currently being supported by S-STEM scholarships.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUESTS

Collaborations between REU Sites and S-STEM awardees should facilitate engaging research experiences for S-STEM scholars within supportive learning communities. An entire REU Site cohort need not consist only of S-STEM scholars, nor does an entire S-STEM cohort from a single university have to participate in the same REU Site. However, any REU Site submitting a supplemental funding request pursuant to this DCL should articulate plans to provide S-STEM scholars with a summer learning community along with an appropriately-sized peer cohort to provide co-curricular and social support. REU Site awardees are encouraged to identify prospective partner S-STEM awardees by using the NSF Awards Advanced Search and searching active awards using the S-STEM Program Element Code (1536).

S-STEM scholars are the only REU participants that can be supported by this supplemental funding. An REU Site supplement funding request must include one or more letter(s) of collaboration from S-STEM awardees who will help recruit and aid S-STEM scholars in applying to the REU Site program. Given this collaboration between REU Sites and S-STEM principal investigators, REU Sites are encouraged to accept S-STEM scholars of all academic years, rather than prioritizing more senior scholars. Eligible REU sites may request up to $10,000 per S-STEM scholar. Up to $8,000 should cover the S-STEM scholar's stipend, meals, and housing. The remaining funds may be used for purposes such as student travel, co-curricular and social support for S-STEM scholars, or other direct costs to support S-STEM scholars at the REU Site. As described in the REU program solicitation (NSF 19-582), all student costs should be entered as Participant Support Costs in the proposed budget and indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on participant support costs. Additional guidance on preparing and submitting a supplemental funding request may be found in the REU solicitation and in Chapter VI.E.4 of the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide. CISE strongly encourages the submission of requests before April 30, 2021; the potential for funding requests after this date may be limited.

At the close of the REU Site summer program that receives supplemental funding pursuant to this DCL, if any S-STEM scholar is interested in continuing their research projects at their home institution, there is the potential for additional funding through the S-STEM program for S-STEM awardees to support the S-STEM scholar's ongoing research participation.

Principal investigators with questions pertaining to this DCL may contact:

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Sincerely,

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REFERENCES

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2 Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter. Washington, DC : Association of American Colleges and Universities.
3 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016. Barriers and Opportunities for 2-Year and 4 -Year STEM Degrees: Systemic Change to Support Students' Diverse Pathways. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/21739.