

Ohio Board of Regents STARS



Student Achievement in Research and Scholarship

PURPOSE

The Student Achievement in Research and Scholarship Program (STARS) is an undergraduate program designed to prepare high achieving, underrepresented minority students (African-American, Hispanic, and Native American) for graduate school, and ultimately, for a career in the professoriate, preferably at an Ohio college or university. While the immediate focus of the program is to encourage and help undergraduate students successfully enroll and participate in graduate school, a long-term goal of the program is to enlarge the pool of underrepresented minority graduate faculty in Ohio to strengthen academic and cultural support systems for underrepresented students. STARS alumni serve as role models for underrepresented minority students and encourage more of these students to pursue and successfully participate in postsecondary education at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Over a decade ago, The Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study recognized a *critical* need for increasing Ohio's pool of minority faculty. Thus, the STARS Program was created in 1991.

DESIGN

The STARS Program offers to undergraduate students an opportunity to conduct scholarly research with a faculty mentor, paid research assistantships, travel scholarships to attend academic conferences, and participation in the campus-based STARS Student Club. Students participate in academic workshops and seminars that will better prepare them for the graduate school admissions process and for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Qualified graduating seniors have the opportunity to be considered for financial assistance during their first year of graduate school in some of the Ohio graduate school programs.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Students are referred for participation in STARS by faculty members. In order to be accepted into the Program, underrepresented minority sophomore, junior, or senior undergraduate college students must demonstrate that they are goal oriented, highly motivated, and high achieving. They must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on 4.0 scale for acceptance into the Program and maintenance of a 3.0 GPA for continued participation. Students must be able to identify a faculty mentor or potential mentor, preferably from the graduate school. Participating students are required to complete a scholarly research project, attend, and present their research project and findings at the Annual Ohio STARS Statewide Student Research Conference. Additionally, STARS students must participate in their campus STARS Student Club or research networking group.

NATURE OF SUPPORT

Financial support for STARS students is provided to participating campuses through the Ohio Board of Regents' state appropriation. STARS students receive stipends to support their research projects. The students also receive an allowance for travel to STARS related academic and research functions such as the Annual Ohio STARS Statewide Student Research Conference. The amount for an annual student stipend varies by participating campus. The travel allowance generally is \$200 per student per year.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

In order to provide the very best opportunities for STARS students, the Program does not require that they stay in Ohio upon completion of the Program. STARS students, however, are encouraged to seek graduate school opportunities, and ultimately, faculty positions, within the state.

PROGRAM SUCCESS

While Ohio has lost some "STARS" to other states (e.g., Michigan), the Program takes pride in the fact that in recent years over 30 STARS students have enrolled in and or earned graduate degrees from graduate schools in Ohio. STARS student participation has grown from just a handful of students in 1991 to 165 current students in 2004-05.

STARS, a modestly funded, state assisted Access Program (currently \$174,640 prior to budget cuts), is a true gem in the state's strategies for access to higher education. However, there is more work to be done to ensure increased successful student outcomes and greater accountability. Some recent strategies include: creation of a STARS program website with information about campus programs, individual STARS students, and their research projects; establishment of the Mentor-of-the-Year Award to recognize and reward exemplary mentoring of STARS students; development of an HEI STARS Student Tracking Database for better tracking of STARS graduates; and implementation of an annual funding application/reporting process that ties achievements and continued funding to outcome measures.



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