Grants Will Fund Students’ Undergraduate Research Projects

Twenty students from the Shippensburg University Honors Program have received undergraduate research grants for the 2009-2010 academic year. The awards were recently announced by the university’s Institute for Public Service.

The research will involve varying fields such as chemistry, history, economics, and psychology and will take multiple forms, including laboratory research and field work. Funding is provided by the SU Foundation and enables students to better understand the scientific process, experience discovery, and develop analytical and communication skills.

“This year’s grant recipients submitted exemplary proposals,” said Dr. Kim Klein, director of the Honors Program. “One of our goals is to expand students’ academic horizons beyond the classroom, and these projects will allow them to explore specialized areas of study.”

Each of the grant applications was chosen by the university’s Research Advisory Committee based on relevance and significance of topic, adequacy of design and feasibility, likelihood for success, and potential for learning. The Honors Program recipients included:

JohnPaul Bennett, a senior finance major from New Cumberland, $792, “Engaging China’s Middle Class,” to study the effects of China’s growing middle class from a socioeconomic perspective and market opportunities for Chinese and foreign companies.

Samantha Dougherty, a junior biology and pre-health major from Broomall, $1,131, “Copper-Resistant Plant-Pathogenic Bacteria,” to determine the presence of bacteria on peach trees at the Penn State Fruit Research Extension Center in Biglerville and help explore options for plant disease control.

Keri Kimes, a senior chemistry major from Monroeville, $1,254, “Determination of the Biochemical Pathway for the Disassembly of Tight Junction Protein in Diabetic Retinopathy,” to study the breakdown of retina cells in the eye that causes persons with diabetes to go blind.

Ashley Martin, a senior biology major from Fayetteville, $1,370, “Elucidating the Role of Atg5 Autophagy Protein in Growth Characteristics of SNB19 Brain Tumor Cells,” to study specific genes in brain tumor cells.

Katie Marshall, a senior marketing and finance major from Chambersburg, and Jon Moats, a senior finance major from Chambersburg, $1,656, “The Effects of Capital Structure on
Financial Performance in American Banking Industry: An Empirical Study,” to analyze the performance of commercial banks from 1993 to 2008 and investigate the optimal financial structure to give regulators insight into bank capital requirements on risk management and bank managers insight into choosing strategies for raising bank capital.

Katie Putz, a senior history major from Jefferson, Md., $167, “The Muja-Who? Identifying the Afghan Mujahedin,” to research the Mujahedin as a conglomeration of various religious and political groups in Afghanistan that has been neglected by historians.

Stacie Stuart, a junior finance and economics major from Warren, $100, “Should We Really Legalize Marijuana,” to collect and analyze information from surveys to determine whether a correlation exists between marijuana use and crime rates.

Kady Taylor, a sophomore elementary education major from Middletown, Del., and Jamie McNulty, a senior French secondary education major from Johnstown, $572, “Reach Out: Enhancing Education in the Dominican Republic,” to construct a sustainable academic/life skills curriculum for child development centers in the Dominican Republic to supplement the students’ abbreviated school days.

Megan Veazey, a senior biology secondary education major from Easton, $436, “Determining the Presence of Bobcats and other Carnivores through Polymerase Chain Reactions and Restriction Enzymes,” to explain skin cells excreted with the feces of large animals found in the forests and woodlands of central Pennsylvania and determine which carnivorous felines are dominant.

The Honors Program at Shippensburg University provides an outstanding undergraduate experience that emphasizes scholarship, leadership, and service. The program is made up of 150 students who are chosen based on academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, and evidence of leadership and civic engagement. Students benefit from small classes, outstanding instruction, exciting research, study abroad, and internship opportunities, and special social and cultural activities. For more information, visit http://www.ship.edu/honors.