ACES Honors Programs

Imagine. . .

- Working closely with top research faculty.
- Beating the rush and registering early for classes.
- Conducting your own research with the help of a professor.
- Participating in advanced courses.
- Gaining special opportunities for personal and academic development.

These rewarding experiences in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences can be yours through the James Scholar Honors Program. James Scholars are eligible for additional scholarships and grants.

Become a James Scholar.

Take the first step by applying for admission to the College of ACES. You will automatically be considered for inclusion in this program, which is available to the top 10 to 15 percent of admitted freshman students.

Once accepted, James Scholars complete at least one course with honors credit during their freshman year, and complete 28 U of I credit hours for the year, while attaining a GPA of 3.4 or above. Then prior to graduation, scholars complete three additional honors courses or activities and conduct a capstone research project.

Current ACES students can also self-nominate for the program before the close of the first semester of their junior year if they have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above.

James Scholars have a unique opportunity to conduct and present research findings during their undergraduate experience in the College of ACES.
“One of the most important lessons I’ve learned through my experience as a James Scholar is how to communicate effectively with peers and colleagues in a constructive manner. I’ve also learned how to manage my time more efficiently so I could juggle my projects, school, job and social life. The opportunity to learn more about the scientific process and how to present research helped confirm my passion for science and research.”

—Kendall Annetti, ACES James Scholar

Expand the frontiers of science.

If you want to challenge your mind and solve problems in the food, agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences, consider applying for the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program, which gives students opportunities to conduct and present research findings.

Take part in one of a broad range of biological, physical, and social science disciplines within the College of ACES with the support of award-winning faculty researchers. Undergraduate research is a great way to contribute to scientific knowledge while learning more about your career interests.

Develop problem-solving skills.

Justin Ang became a James Scholar in the fall of his junior year, encouraged by his professor, Michael Plewa. Ang worked in Plewa’s lab examining DNA damage. The results from his first few experiments showed exactly the opposite of what the two expected. After repeating the experiment a few more times, Ang had the same results. Although he never solved the initial problem, his research helped his professor make a very important and unexpected discovery.

“I’ve learned to question everything,” Ang said. “There are many smarter people than me out there. However, everyone makes mistakes and has biases, so I’ve learned to think for myself and ask hard questions.”

Discover your passions.

For Kendall Annetti, being a James Scholar opened her eyes to new passions and job opportunities. Her research surveying parasites in waterfowl and game birds in Illinois has helped her combine her passions into an opportunity to advance scientific knowledge.

“I want to go to vet school, so we focused my project on a health-related topic,” she said.

Learn how to succeed in the real world.

Time management and organization are two powerful traits that James Scholars put to use while at the University of Illinois.

“Completing a research project, taking honors classes and a graduate-level course, and maintaining a high GPA might sound tough,” said Anita Lucius, a James Scholar from Indonesia. “But at the end of the program, you will see the value of these standards, and you will never regret your decision to become a James Scholar.”

Eager to know more?

• Visit academics.aces.illinois.edu/james_scholars
• Call 217-333-3380
• Email Dr. Bill Simmons, ACES Honors Dean, at fsimmons@illinois.edu

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