

DIVISION OF NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM: FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S CHALLENGES AND PROPELLING BRIGHT MINDS

Graduate students in the Division of Nutritional Sciences (DNS) are required to complete a challenging interdisciplinary nutrition-based curriculum and execute innovative, state-of-the-science dissertation research. However, preparing transformative leaders requires other “soft skills” that can only be obtained through a robust professional development program. The DNS Margin of Excellence Program teaches students to prepare grant proposals and manage a research budget, and provides the opportunity for students to travel to national and international meetings to present original research and interact with peers from other institutions.

OPPORTUNITY:

Five of the ten leading causes of death are directly related to nutrition, and the public is increasingly aware of the link between diet and health. Solving the major health problems of our time will require an interdisciplinary effort.

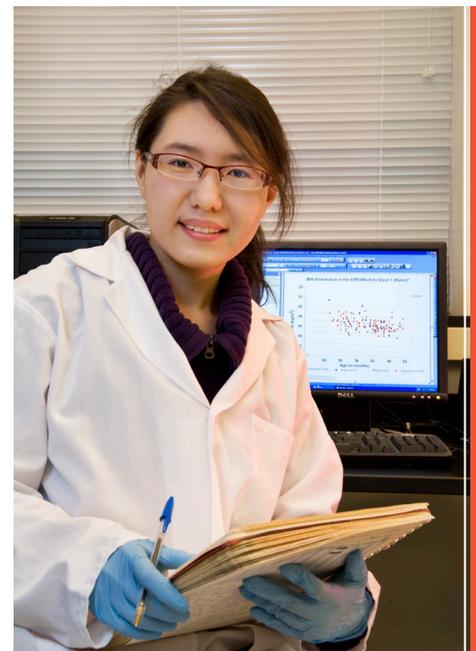
As one of the top nutritional sciences programs in the country, with a highly interdisciplinary faculty, DNS is uniquely positioned to train the next generation of nutritional scientists. Throughout their graduate program, DNS students are trained to solve problems using an interdisciplinary research approach. Graduates of the DNS program enter the workforce ready to serve as leaders of the interdisciplinary charge against major health problems.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Currently, 75% of all DNS students have the opportunity to participate in the Margin of Excellence Program. These students learn vital grant writing skills and/or receive funds to offset the cost of travel to top national and international conferences to present their research and network with faculty and students from other institutions.

The Division’s goal is to expand the Margin of Excellence Program in order to achieve the following:

- Provide 100% of DNS students with the opportunity to gain vital grant writing and project management experience.
- Increase Margin of Excellence grant funding levels so that students may pursue more significant research projects (the current maximum seed grant funding level is \$2,000).
- Increase the level of conference travel funding provided to students to further offset the increasing costs associated with travel to scientific conferences (current Margin of Excellence Conference Travel Grants provide \$400-500/student). Due to rising travel costs some students are unable to afford the cost of travel to vital scientific conferences.



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To expand the Margin of Excellence Program as described above, the Division of Nutritional Sciences seeks to create an endowment, which would generate annual funding.



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