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The Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence

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Very top-twenty university has, as a fundamental component, an outstanding undergraduate program. At the University of Kentucky, The Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence is not only the symbol, but the embodiment, of its commitment to the finest undergraduate education. The Chellgren Center embraces a comprehensive array of teaching and research programs, professors, and services designed to enhance, develop, foster, and deliver the exceptional undergraduate experience that is one of the major components of the University’s mission.

Chellgren Fellows Program
The Chellgren Fellows Program is for students with exceptional academic potential and aspirations who are eager to participate in a special learning community designed to cultivate extraordinary achievement. Chellgren Fellows (Chellos) are students who have the potential not only to excel at UK but also to compete successfully for the highest honors and awards within and outside of the University. The learning community consists of the collaborative interactions among students, faculty, and staff that create an intellectually stimulating environment, nurture high academic aspirations, and foster scholarly and personal development reflective of undergraduate excellence. Each spring, a new class of Chellgren Undergraduate Fellows is selected, while returning fellows serve as models and mentors to incoming fellows. Each fall, the newly selected Chellos engage in a major scholarly creative or research project under the mentorship of a faculty member, and take a course in Methods of Scholarly Inquiry in which they learn and employ advanced techniques in their own projects.

Mentoring
Outstanding faculty from across campus serve as individual mentors for the Chellos as they engage in their scholarly projects. Through regular meetings and conversations, mentors help students develop strategies for engaging in the intellectual life of the University with an emphasis on opportunities available to them both within and outside the UK community, such as service learning experiences, internships, education abroad, undergraduate research, community service, and leadership opportunities. Mentors may elect to invite students to participate in sessions with their graduate students, attend lab meetings, review and discuss papers or projects being planned, and attend scholarly talks. Mentors help Chellos identify external scholarship opportunities and assist them in preparing applications and developing skills used to acquire these awards (e.g., writing personal statements, successful interviewing).

The Chellgren Center Community Experience
The learning community consists of Fellows, faculty mentors, and professional staff affiliated with the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence, all working together to make the Chellos’ undergraduate experience one of an exceptionally high standard.

Chellos are expected to attend regular meetings with mentors and peers, as well as other pertinent events organized by the Center such as lectures at local colleges and universities, musical performances on and off campus, and art exhibits. At regularly scheduled meetings, Chellos learn about special educational programs and opportunities such as undergraduate research experiences, education abroad, internships, and volunteer activities.

The Chellgren Fellows Service Learning Project
To help extend learning to the real world and foster responsible citizenship, each Chellgren Fellow participates in an annual service learning project or projects designed by the Fellows themselves with guidance from faculty affiliated with the Chellgren Center.

Selection Process and Timeline
Chellos are accepted through a competitive application process. Students are eligible to apply to the program after their first semester at UK. Applicants must have a 3.75 GPA or above. A committee of faculty evaluates and selects Chellos based on the following criteria:

- Academic credentials and extracurricular activities from junior year in high school
- Academic performance at UK (GPA, course selections, extracurricular activities)
- Essays completed as part of the application
- Letters of recommendation
Chellgren Center Highlights from 2007-2008

On the following pages, several of the highlights of Chellgren Center-associated programs during the previous academic year are described. Students from several eUreKa! programs relate their research, including the Beckman Scholars Program, the summer research and creativity awards, the UKURP (UK Undergraduate Research Program), support for undergraduate travel to scholarly conferences, and the Oswald Research and Creativity Program. Finally, a gallery of images from the third annual UK Showcase of Scholars, an event sponsored by the UK student Society for the Promotion of Undergraduate Research (S.P.U.R.), is presented.

Paul W. Chellgren
The benefactors of the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence are Paul W. Chellgren and his family. A UK graduate, Mr. Chellgren was an Honors Program student and star intercollegiate debater. He subsequently earned a Harvard MBA and a D.D.E. from Oxford University, where he has been named an Honorary Fellow. In addition to a celebrated career in business, one that included service as the CEO of Ashland Inc., Mr. Chellgren has been a particularly active UK alumus, having served for eleven years on the UK Board of Trustees. The generous gift from Mr. Chellgren and his family helped establish the Chellgren Endowed Chair and five named professorships.

The Beckman Scholars Program, established in 1997, is an invited program for accredited universities and four-year colleges in the US. It provides scholarships that contribute significantly to advancing the education, research training, and personal development of select students in chemistry, biochemistry, and the biological and medical sciences. The sustained, in-depth undergraduate research experiences and comprehensive faculty mentoring are unique in terms of program scope, content, and level of scholarship awards. The University of Kentucky has been invited to apply for the program three times, and was selected to participate for three years beginning in 2002, in 2005, and again in 2008.

The Beckman Scholars Program provides support for no more than three outstanding undergraduate researchers per year. Scholars receive support for two summers and the intervening academic year, including a generous scholarship award plus stipends for supplies and travel. Scholars must conduct their research in chemistry, biochemistry, the biological and medical sciences, or some interdisciplinary combination of these disciplines, in the laboratory of and under the mentorship of a University of Kentucky faculty member approved by the Beckman Foundation. The currently approved Beckman mentors are listed below.

Being named a Beckman Scholar is an extraordinarily high honor. The process by which a scholar is selected is quite rigorous. The selection is conducted by a committee of research faculty members each with a strong record of mentoring undergraduate researchers. The selection process evaluates 1) the ability of the candidate in both written and oral communication by considering a required research essay and conducting an interview of each finalist; 2) the past achievements of the candidate by reviewing the entire undergraduate transcript, academic honors received, and all previous research experience; 3) the candidate’s intellect, character, and potential to excel as a researcher by appraising a required written research plan and at least

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