

Third College awarded \$500,000 by the National Institutes of Health to increase the number of minority students working in biomedical sciences

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The Third College at the University of California, San Diego has been awarded a three-year, \$500,000 grant by the National Institutes of Health to increase the number of minority students working in the biomedical sciences.

The award, made to Third College through the Minority Biomedical Support Program of NIH, will enable the college to intensify its efforts to increase minority participation in the biomedical sciences. The funds, which begin immediately, will be used primarily to provide modest stipends for students to participate in faculty directed research projects.

Although the grant was awarded to Third College, eligible students from Revelle College, John Muir College and Fourth College may also apply. Eighteen undergraduate and six graduate students will be funded during the first year. The number will increase to 24 undergraduates and six graduates during the second and the third years.

Dr. Willie C. Brown, assistant professor of biology, will serve as program director for the project. According to Brown, the grant will allow upper division and graduate students to become involved in the design and execution of laboratory experiments as well as the interpretation of data and even the presentation of findings at research conferences.

"These students will be allowed to participate in on-going faculty research as laboratory research assistants," Brown said. "They will be allowed to proceed at their own pace and in their own direction under the guidance of a faculty member."

Brown, who was responsible for the application to the NIH for the grant, said the Minority Biomedical Support Program was established initially to enhance biomedical research in the traditional Black colleges. The program has now been expanded to include other institutions which have substantial ethnic minority enrollments and a demonstrated commitment to the encouragement and assistance of minority students and faculty.

"A National Science Foundation survey conducted in 1970 found that of about 300,000 scientist Ph.D.'s in the United States at that time, only about 600 were Black and fewer than 100 were from other minority groups," Brown said.

"The survey also found that 18 per cent of all graduate students in science in the United States were foreign born while less than 1 per cent were native born minorities," he said., "It was obvious that the nation had a substantial untapped source of scientific manpower."

The grant to UCSD's Third College marks the first time that a large institution, not predominantly minority, has been awarded MBS funds. California State University at Los Angeles is the only other California educational institution to previously have received a grant from the agency.

"We see this program as something that will stimulate more minority students to come to UCSD," Brown said. "We see it as something that can motivate them to greater achievement."

"Many minority students are not aware of the contributions that can be made to science or medicine because of the small number of minorities involved in these fields," Brown said. "There are few role models in these areas for them to follow.

"In addition," Brown said, "many of our minority students come from low income families and must support themselves or contribute to the support of their families. Research is very time consuming and the students just don't have the time left for it. The MBS funds will provide the support and offer on-the-job training at the same time."

According to Dr. Joseph Watson, Provost of Third College, the goals of the MBS program coincide with the major objectives of Third College to establish a major center in California for the education and training of large numbers of minority students.

"This award represents a major endorsement of the efforts of Third College to expand minority participation in higher education and research," Watson said. "We accept it with heightened dedication and commitment to the goals on which Third College was founded in 1970."

Brown said he sees the grant as just a beginning for the campus. He said he and others in the minority science program at UCSD hope to enlarge the program through additional federal, state and private funding.

"We plan to seek other support to further develop the program and to make it one of the most effective of its type in the country," Brown said.

Serving with Brown as faculty project directors for the program are Dr. Edward C. Alexander, assistant professor of chemistry, and Dr. Trevor C. McMorris and Dr. Elvin Harper, associate professors of chemistry. Also Dr. Ramon Pinon and Dr. P. A. G. Fortes, assistant professors of biology and Dr. Percy Russell, associate professor of biology.

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