Diverse Group Of Aspiring Young Scientists Get SMART At UNH In July

Beth Potier
UNH Media Relations

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Reporters and editors: Subhash Minocha, professor of plant biology and genetics and director of Project SMART, is available at 603-862-3840 or sminocha@unh.edu.

DURHAM, N.H. - The 44 high school juniors and seniors attending the 19th annual Project SMART (Science and Mathematics Achievement through Research Training) at the University of New Hampshire this month are a more diverse group than ever, thanks to grant funding from the Liberty Mutual Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service. The grants aim to support under-served students who might otherwise not have been able to afford Project SMART, a four-week summer institute that educates talented high school students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, areas.

"Thanks to these grants, Project SMART will host its most diverse group of students ever, coming from all over New England and as far away as rural Alaska and Thessaloniki, Greece," says Subhash Minocha, professor of plant biology and genetics at UNH and director of Project SMART since it began in 1991.

From July 6 - 31, 2009, Project SMART students will live on campus and participate in lectures, labs, discussions, research experience, field trips and networking with UNH scientists. Participants focus in one of three areas: biotechnology and nanotechnology, marine and environmental science, and space science. Students study and research such diverse topics as cloning, biological warfare, invasive species, imaging nano-structures, high-altitude balloon launching, urban sprawl and climate change. Students interact and network with more than 20 UNH faculty members from the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA) and College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (CEPS).

"Project SMART gives these highly motivated students an opportunity to use modern instrumentation, investigate research questions and analyze data, and explore cutting edge advances in science," says Minocha. "They also get a great overview of UNH and New Hampshire's natural beauty."

In addition to Liberty Mutual and the U.S. Forest Service, Project SMART is supported by the NH Space Grant Consortium, National Science Foundation (NH EPSCoR and NSF Career fellowships to faculty), the deans of COLSA and CEPS, and the Center for High-rate Nanomanufacturing. The laboratory component of the biotechnology module is supported by generous donations of materials and supplies by several biotechnology-related companies.

For more information, go to www.smart.unh.edu.
The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, space-grant and community-engaged university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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**Photograph available to download:**
Caption: Project SMART students Gracie Maull (left) of Exeter, a senior at Miss Porter 's School, and Felecia Farrell (right) of Springfield, Mass., a senior at SABIS International Charter School, learn to extract samples with a pipette from Project SMART director and UNH professor of plant biology Subhash Minocha (center).
Credit: Perry Smith, UNH Photographic Services