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Empowering passionate and talented  
biology students who will make an

*impact*

for years to come

**The Biology, Experience, Scholarship, and Training  
(BEST) Scholar Program**

School of Molecular & Cellular Biology | School of Integrative Biology

# The Biology, Experience, Scholarship, and Training (BEST) Scholar Program

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As the cost of pursuing higher education has risen in recent decades and the competition for exceptional students intensifies, the **Schools of Molecular & Cellular Biology** and **Integrative Biology** launched a scholarship program to help recruit exemplary biology and biochemistry students. We are committed to bringing top students to our programs and reducing financial barriers to an excellent education.

With a BEST Scholarship, students can make their dreams of studying and pursuing a career in biology a reality. Recipients receive a financial award and are mentored by our schools' leaders. Thanks to valuable guidance from the directors, students successfully transition from high school to a research university. The school's directors meet with BEST Scholars regularly during the school year to offer advice about coursework, strategies for studying, how to approach a research mentor and develop relationships in academia, how to find a balance between research and coursework, and much more.



BEST Scholar **Will Reiser** works in the lab of microbiology professor Christopher Brooke, who investigates how viruses replicate, evolve, and cause disease.

*"The BEST program has allowed me to become fully invested in the numerous opportunities that this great university has to offer. The ability to build relationships through the individual mentorship from the directors of MCB and IB is truly a privilege and not something that I take for granted. Dr. Milan Bagchi and Dr. Carla Cáceres are very approachable and always happy to help; their guidance has been extremely beneficial."*

BEST Scholar **Andrew Zhang**, who also is an undergraduate researcher, was recently selected to participate in the Mayo Clinic & Illinois Alliance Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program.



*"Being a BEST Scholar has allowed me to meet great classmates with whom I enjoy working. I've also received valuable guidance and support from my advisors and directors."*

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## Supporting BEST Scholars

With the help of our alumni and friends, we are dedicated to expanding the BEST Scholar Program. Our hope is to offer even more scholarships to attract additional high achieving students, keeping them in the state of Illinois. We also envision expanding the one-time award and making it a renewable award for the four years our BEST Scholars are at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

### Biology, Experience, Scholarship, and Training (BEST) Scholar Program

**For:** Outstanding incoming biology freshmen

**Qualifications:** To be eligible for a BEST Scholarship, applicants must be Illinois residents who have demonstrated academic excellence in high school. Additionally, they must demonstrate a passion for studying biology and appropriate time management skills through participation in activities and/or work experience. Consideration is given to the students' background and financial need.

**Number of students chosen per year:** 6-13

**Award amount:** \$5,000



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