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Bridge to Biology Program Premieres at Morris

Summary: A new program for incoming biology students premieres at Morris this summer.

(August 14, 2013)-The University of Minnesota, Morris is introducing a new program for incoming biology students. Held at scenic Lake Itasca in the week prior to First-Year Student Orientation, [Bridge to Biology](#) is designed to encourage early bonds among students and to introduce incoming freshmen to upper-level peer mentors. The program also aims to build student/faculty relationships, introduce students to undergraduate research opportunities, and instill college survival skills.

The program will serve 50 participants—nearly one-third of the expected incoming biology students. While all students interested in biology were encouraged to apply, priority was given to those who met at least one of the following criteria: first-generation college students, members of groups traditionally underrepresented in the sciences, or students from families with high financial need.

“One thing we know is that many students leave science majors very early in their undergraduate careers because they find the immediate transition from high school to college academic expectations a shock,” says Peter Wyckoff, associate professor of biology. “We know that this is particularly true for our target demographic groups. The hope of Bridge to Biology is to allow students to form relationships with their peers and more experienced students that will provide support for the transition into college.”

Bridge to Biology is one of [five new programs](#) at Morris aimed at encouraging success in science for students from all backgrounds. These programs are supported by a four-year, \$1.2 million grant awarded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) in the fall of 2012. Morris was one of only 47 small undergraduate universities and colleges in the United States selected from an initial pool of 215 invited schools.

According to Wyckoff, increasing retention of students in the sciences throughout their undergraduate careers—and beyond—is a primary aim of Morris’s HHMI programming. He trusts that Bridge to Biology will be just the first step in these incoming students’ successful undergraduate careers.

The Bridge to Biology program is supported in part by a grant to the University of Minnesota, Morris from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute through the Precollege and Undergraduate Science Education Program.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.