



2024 IMPACT CIRCLE

Project Title: Training the Next Generation of Aging Researchers

Investigator(s) and collaborations: Buck faculty

Unmet Need/Primary Question:

Less than a third of Gen Z students want to pursue a career in STEM and many cite lack of exposure or support as primary reasons. Laboratories across the country are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and place young students and scientists in their labs putting the future of the American biomedical research enterprise at risk. There is a growing need to identify and develop a pipeline of accomplished and talented undergraduate students interested in becoming future scientists and aging researchers and to provide them with unparalleled opportunities to learn and train in Buck laboratories under the guidance and mentorship of Buck scientists.



2023 Summer Scholar Cohort

Novel Hypothesis:

Supporting the growth and development of the Buck Summer Scholars Program will simultaneously provide unmatched opportunities to undergraduate STEM students seeking a career in science, while also advancing and accelerating research efforts at the Buck by increasing recruitment, productivity, branding, and training.

Project Proposal:

This undergraduate summer internship program will establish a key part of a talent pipeline that will support Buck research while at the same time increase the Buck's national profile and develop a well-trained aging research workforce. One recurring issue for Buck Institute research

is recruitment. The ability to recruit top research assistants, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers has a direct impact on research at the Buck Institute. Other institutions may have more name recognition outside the aging community. Companies can offer higher salaries. How can the Buck Institute ensure that the best and brightest minds think of the Buck as a premiere training location that transcends those considerations? The Summer Scholars Program will help address this issue.

Description of Potential Impact:

The Summer Scholars Program will boost awareness of the Buck Institute through the search for candidates at universities across the country. From a training standpoint, the program is designed to prepare participants for graduate school and in fact includes much of the same scientific writing and oral presentation training found in graduate programs, potentially enabling a seamless transition from intern to graduate student at the Buck in the future. Despite the short time at the Buck, rigorous selection and careful project choices make tangible intern contributions to ongoing research possible. Continuing to offer the program next year will enable the Buck to build upon these benefits as well as strengthen future funding searches.