researcHStart Program for High School Students 2016

DESCRIPTION:

The researcHStart program is an 8-week cancer-focused research and career development experience for the most promising high school students from the Chicago and Champaign-Urbana areas. The research experience is the core of the program, which provides hands-on, full-time immersion into a cancer research environment under the supervision of an established, funded investigator. Depending on the specific project and mentor, students will develop an understanding of cancer epidemiology, treatment of cancer, imaging, molecular and biochemical underpinnings of cancer, immunology, pharmacogenomics of anticancer agents, engineering, biomarker development, development of anticancer agents, experimental cancer therapeutics, and/or cancer disparities.

Research projects will be designed by mentors to be independent, limited, and achievable in 8 weeks. Students will be mentored through frequent one-on-one interactions with a University of Chicago or University of Illinois faculty member, and may be trained in technical skills by senior graduate students, fellows, or technical staff in the laboratory. As an active member of the research group, program students are expected to participate in laboratory meetings, seminars, and journal clubs as required by the mentor.

Students will also participate in various workshops to gain a broader understanding of cancer and cancer-related careers, and develop critical problem-solving and presentation skills. These 1.5- to 2-hour sessions, held once per week, will be led by University of Chicago or University of Illinois faculty. These sessions are designed to encourage interaction and discussion. Topics may include: introduction to cancer, treatment of cancer, tumor immunology, cancer clinical trials, cancer disparities, specific cancer types, personalized medicine, searching the literature, giving effective oral and poster research presentations, cancer-related careers, developing scientific writing skills, community outreach opportunities in science, and working on a team. At the end of the 8 weeks all students will participate in a Research Symposium held at the University of Chicago or University of Illinois. Participants will receive a $2,000 stipend at the end of the program.

Selection for the program is based upon the student’s: (1) interests, as expressed in an essay; (2) academic transcript; (3) two letters of recommendation (at least one letter must be from a teacher).

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

The University of Chicago
The University of Illinois at Chicago
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

APPLICATION DUE DATE:

January 22, 2016

PROGRAM DATES:

June 27, 2016 – August 19, 2016

The University of Chicago Medicine & Biological Sciences
Comprehensive Cancer Center
c/o researcHStart Program
900 E. 57th Street, Box 11
Chicago, IL 60637
researcHStart@bsd.uchicago.edu

The University of Illinois at Chicago
Clinical Cancer Center
1801 W. Taylor, Suite 1E
Chicago, IL 60612
cancer@uic.edu

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
c/o researcHStart Program
405 N. Mathews Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801
researcHStart@illinois.edu
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:
- Current high school junior or senior
- Strong ability in math and science
- Interest in pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering or medicine
- Minimum GPA of 3.0 in core subjects and/or above average standardized test scores
- Outstanding attendance record and positive attitude
- Demonstrated leadership and self-management skills
- United States citizen or a permanent resident

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:
Complete applications (application form, transcripts, and essay) must be received no later than January 22, 2016. The letters of recommendation must be received within one week of the application submission date for application to be considered complete.

General Information
Self-explanatory

Underrepresented Minority Information (OPTIONAL)
This optional information is asked for administrative purposes only. Indicating whether you are or are not an underrepresented minority does in no way determine acceptance into the program. A person is considered an underrepresented minority when he/she is from a population group that is underrepresented in the sciences and cancer research including: African American, Hispanic/Mexican American, Native American/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander OR first-generation college-bound OR economically disadvantaged.

Academic Information
Choice of Summer Research Experience Location: students must choose from the University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago or the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
School: include name, address and phone number
Present educational level: indicate if you are a high school junior or senior
Current GPA: list most current grade point average
Include all college-bound scores indicating your overall score or list N/A for not applicable for the following: PSAT, ACT, and SAT
Transcripts: attach most recent transcripts

Recommendation Letters
Provide name, title, school, phone number and e-mail of two recommenders (at least one letter must be from a teacher). Please ask them to submit their letter of recommendation within one week of your application submission. We recommend you contact your recommenders as soon as you decide to submit an application so they are aware of submission deadlines.

**FOR RECOMMENDER**
Provide a one-two page recommendation letter on professional letterhead describing the qualities and potential of the applicant. The letter must include:
- Your qualifications as recommender
- Summary of applicants academic performance
- Applicants skills and qualifications for a summer project
- At least one example of when the applicant excelled
The letter must be received within one week of the application submission and should be sent as an e-mail attachment to the institution of the applicant's choice – see e-mail links below:
Written Summary
Each student must complete an essay of no more than 300 words explaining why they wish to participate in this program and what they hope to achieve in the future. Word or adobe PDF versions accepted and uploaded with application.

Acknowledgment
Please read each statement carefully and initial where indicated.

To complete the online application PRESS HERE
(Having problems with the hyperlink? Contact researchStart@bsd.uchicago.edu for further instructions)

Checklist
- Application (due January 22, 2016)
  - GPA – required
  - PSAT/ACT/SAT Scores – not required
  - Transcripts - required
  - Written Summary - required
- Contact Recommenders (letters due within one week of application submission)

Conflict of Interest: The selection of students is managed by an independent review panel. Immediate family members of individuals on the independent review panel or participating institutions are not eligible for the researchStart program at that site. All applications will be subject to the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Important Dates (student participation in all events is mandatory):
- Interviews - week of February 15 – 19, 2016 (specific date/times TBD)
- Program acceptance notification - February 29, 2016
- Student commitment - March 14, 2016
- 8-Week Program - June 27, 2016 – August 19, 2016

Please note: This program does not allow absences for extended vacations, camps or prior commitments.
Frequently Asked Questions
FAQ Sheet

1. How is the program defined?
   - The researcHStart program is a research-focused training experience for high school students
designed to expose students to and promote careers in clinical, translational, basic, and
population-based cancer research.

2. What are the criteria for a student to apply to the researcHStart program for high school students?
   - Current high school junior
   - Strong ability in math and science
   - Interest in pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering or medicine
   - Minimum GPA of 3.0 in core subjects and/or above average standardized test scores
   - Outstanding attendance record and positive attitude
   - Demonstrated leadership and self-management skills
   - United States citizen or a permanent resident

3. When is the deadline for application/letters of recommendation?
   - Applications must be received by January 22, 2016. Letters of recommendation within one (1)
     week of the application submission date (January 29, 2016). It is the responsibility of the
     applicant to contact the recommenders; a follow-up request from the institution will be sent
     indicating the LOR due date.

4. What does a complete application consist of?
   - Application Form
   - Transcripts
   - Essay (300 word maximum)
   - Two Letters of Recommendation (at least one letter must be from a teacher)

5. How many students will be selected?
   - Up to 4 students per site

6. What is the duration of the Program?
   - The researcHStart program lasts eight weeks, including regular work hours (eight hours per
     weekday) for five days per week. All absences should be communicated with the Program
     administrators and research mentors. Under no circumstances should vacations or camps be
     scheduled during this time

7. Is there a stipend?
   - Yes, a total stipend of $2,000 will be provided upon completion of the 8-week Summer
     Research Experience

8. Is the stipend subject to income tax?
   - Yes, the stipend is taxable.
9. Is there reimbursement for transportation?
   - No

10. Can students from any high school apply?
    - Yes, but his program does not provide housing such that students should have access to daily transportation. When choosing a program site in which to apply to, it is best to choose one within close proximity.

11. Who can I contact for more information?
    - Any questions or additional information please contact researchStart@bsd.uchicago.edu.