UC LEADS (Leadership Excellence Through Advanced Degrees)

The goal of the University of California's new Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS) program is to educate California's future leaders by preparing promising students for advanced education in science, technology, mathematics and engineering (STEM). The program is designed to identify upper-division undergraduate students with the potential to succeed in these disciplines, but who have experienced situations or conditions that have adversely impacted their advancement in their field of study.

Once chosen as UC LEADS Scholars, the students embark upon a two-year program of scientific research and graduate school preparation guided by individual Faculty Mentors. Scholars are provided with an excellent opportunity to explore their discipline, experience a research environment, and improve their opportunities for future study in their chosen field. The Scholar gains valuable educational experience, the University a better prepared and more diverse graduate applicant pool, and the State, well-educated future leaders. Each Scholar is mentored by a member of the UC faculty, who assists the student in designing a plan of research and enrichment activities fitted to the individual interests and academic goals of the Scholar. This "Action Plan" includes:

- Academic year research
- Paid summer research experience
- Participation in the University-wide UC LEADS Symposium
- Attendance at professional or scientific society meetings
- Travel to another UC campus
- Academic enrichment activities, including preparation for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

CLICK HERE TO APPLY!!!

2009 LEADS Program (NOTE: Deadline to apply is Monday, April 6, 11:59PM)

--> Download the 2009 Letter of Recommendation Form

--> Download the 2009 Personal Statement Questions

UC LEADS Website (Office of the President)

Program Components

UC LEADS will achieve these important aims by providing faculty mentoring, experiential learning in summer and academic-year research programs, involvement in professional and scientific societies, exposure to the UC graduate environment, and participation in key academic enrichment programs, including leadership development activities.

1. Undergraduate Mentorship Experience

Scholars are matched with UC faculty members who serve as advisors and mentors. Mentors assist the scholars in developing and completing an educational action plan that includes structured research, graduate school preparation and exploration, and participation in professional and/or scientific society meetings. This action plan should a) clearly describe the expenses required to support the scholar's research activities that will be supported by the UC LEADS program, and b) be approved by the scholar, mentor, and campus coordinator. Mentors also provide academic counseling related to challenges encountered in implementation of the educational plan.

2. Academic Year Research

The scholars will participate in an organized research program during each academic year, under the direction of the faculty mentor.

3. Campus Academic Enrichment and Leadership Development Opportunities

Scholars will participate in academic enrichment programs providing special training in areas critical to academic and professional success, such as scientific writing, preparing and making academic presentations, and development of specific research or research-related skills. By the end of the second summer, scholars will have participated in Graduate Record Exam (GRE) preparation training activities.

During the second academic year of the program, scholars will prepare a graduate academic admission application and an appropriate fellowship application.

Campus coordinators will assist scholars in developing leadership skills through participation in supervised experiential learning opportunities (e.g. occasions to lead or mentor scholars within or outside the program) or workshops (e.g. time management, communication, modes of working with and promoting diversity, course-work success).

4. Annual University-Wide Symposium

All UC LEADS Scholars will participate in the annual Koret UC LEADS Research and Leadership Symposium. The event features:

- All scholars presenting their research results and methodologies with feedback from their colleagues, graduate students, and faculty members;
- Opportunities to network with fellow Scholars, graduate students, graduate program administrators, and faculty members;
- Scientific and academic presentations by leaders in the STEM fields of study, covering such topics as diversity in science, leadership in academia and industry, laboratory ethics, financing graduate education, and balancing family and graduate school;
- Presentations by national leaders in government, business, or industry addressing issues of leadership in an increasingly diverse STEM environment; and,
- Opportunities to learn about mentoring future generations of students who may face obstacles to participation in higher education similar to those that they may have experienced in their own life.

5. Summer Research Program Experience

UC LEADS Scholars participate in two summer research experiences. The first takes place on the Scholar's home campus. Scholars must commit to working full time on a research project during the summer (40 hours/week). They receive a minimum summer stipend of $3,000 and housing or housing compensation.

The second summer research experience occurs at another UC campus. Scholars must commit to working full time on a research project during the summer (40 hours/week). They receive a minimum summer stipend of $3,000 and housing or housing compensation.

6. Involvement in Professional and Scientific Societies

Scholars are encouraged to participate in national or regional professional or scientific society meetings. UC LEADS provides support for registration, travel, and accommodation costs of attending these meetings.

7. Scientific Research and Presentations

In addition to the Koret UC LEADS Research and Leadership Symposium and their summer presentation, Scholars will present their research at least one time per year. UC LEADS encourages Scholars to present their work at national or regional scientific meetings.

8. Travel to Other UC Campuses for Training and Exposure to Campus Graduate Study Opportunites

Scholars are expected to travel to at least one UC campus each year (in addition to second summer research travel). Scholars have the opportunity to meet with graduate students and faculty, and participate in campus tours designed to acquaint scholars with various aspects of campus life and graduate programs. These visits provide the Scholars with the opportunity to make informed decisions about their second summer placement as well as learn about graduate programs of study within the University of California. UC LEADS provides travel support for these campus visits.

Program Eligibility and Requirements

To be eligible for selection, applicants must be:

- Enrolled in, or about to be enrolled in, a UC undergraduate degree program in the sciences, technology, engineering, or mathematics
- On track to receive a bachelor's degree at the conclusion of the second year of the UC LEADS program (i.e. should apply prior to junior year or prior to the fourth year if on a five-year plan)
- In good academic standing in undergraduate degree program
- Able to demonstrate potential for success in a graduate program
- Citizens or permanent residents of the United States

How to Apply?

The UC LEADS program identifies students who have:

- Experienced educational barriers to their academic progress, or who express a commitment to address the barriers that prevent participation of students from underrepresented groups in graduate academic programs.
- Experienced situations or conditions that impacted their advancement or ability to advance in a STEM field (e.g. the absence of a role model in the STEM field, absence of a family member who received a four-year college degree, or graduation from a high school with poor financial or curricular support).
- Leadership potential to address the issues of underrepresentation of domestic minorities in the STEM fields.
- The potential to gain the personal and multicultural competency skills necessary to address the needs of a diverse State and global community through science and technology.

The following materials are needed to complete the UC LEADS application. All application materials must be submitted by April 6, 2009.

- UC LEADS application form
- Statement of purpose and personal essay, as described in application
- Two letters of recommendation from a faculty member, teaching assistant, academic preceptor, departmental advisor, or program official from a science, engineering or mathematics program
- One unofficial transcript from your current institution

Click on the following link to download a copy of the UC LEADS application.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about UC Merced LEADS, please don't hesitate to contact the Graduate Division.

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