

SCIENCE & MEDICINE GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS

A Newsletter for students, alumni, and friends of SciMed GRS

GREETINGS FROM THE PROGRAM

The SciMed GRS Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was established in 2008 and serves to enhance the experience of underrepresented students receiving graduate degrees in biological disciplines. SciMed GRS is a unique program offering professional development, community resources, and funding opportunities for underrepresented minority students. The program currently supports over 130 students in 38 graduate programs spanning four schools and colleges on campus. The program is delighted by the recent surge in graduations, now with a vast network of over 160 alumni working in academia, industry, and related disciplinary fields. In this newsletter, we feature both current students and alumni to showcase the breadth of experience and success of scholars in the program. We hope you enjoy reading about the continued growth and success of the SciMed GRS program.

- DR. BETH MEYERAND, SCIMED GRS DIRECTOR
- ABBEY THOMPSON, SCIMED GRS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
- MICHELLE PARMENTER, SCIMED GRS COORDINATOR



A LOOK AT THIS ISSUE:

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SCIMED GRS BY THE NUMBERS

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| 163 | Alumni |
| 133 | Current Fellows |
| 38 | UW graduate programs affiliated |
| 14 | NSF GRFP Recipients |
| 11 | Bouchet Honor Society Scholars |
| 2 | Ford Foundation Recipients |

SCIMED GRS FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Elaine Alarid | Oncology |
| Lytic Batholomay | Pathobiological Sciences |
| Ian Bird | Obstetrics and Gynecology |
| Thomas Browne | Assistant Dean CALS Undergraduate Program |
| Lara Collier | Pharmacy |
| Tracy Downs | Urology |
| Richard Eisenstein | Nutritional Sciences |
| Zsuzsanna Fabry | Pathology and Laboratory Medicine |
| Jeremy Foltz | Agriculture and Applied Economics |
| Brian Fox | Biochemistry |
| Douglass Henderson | Engineering Physics and Medical Physics |
| James Keck | Biomolecular Chemistry |
| Charles Lauhon | Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| Beth Meyerand | SciMed GRS Director and Medical Physics |
| Troy Runge | Biological Systems Engineering |
| Jade Wang | Bacteriology |
| Shaneda Warren Anderson | Population Health |

SCIMED GRS GRADUATE PROGRAMS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Ag & Applied Economics | Genetics |
| Agroecology | Health Services Research in Pharmacy |
| Agronomy | Horticulture |
| Animal Science | Integrated Program in Biochemistry |
| Bacteriology | Life Sciences Communications |
| Biological Systems Engineering | Medical Genetics |
| Biomedical Data Science | Medical Physics |
| Biophysics | Microbiology Doctoral Training Program |
| Cancer Biology | Molecular & Cellular Pharmacology |
| Cellular & Molecular Biology | Molecular & Env. Toxicology |
| Cellular & Molecular Pathology | Neuroscience Training Program |
| Clinical Investigation | Nutritional Sciences |
| Comparative Biomedical Sciences | Pharmaceutical Sciences |
| Dairy Science | Physiology |
| Endocrinology & Reprod. Physiology | Plant Breeding & Plant Genetics |
| Entomology | Plant Pathology |
| Epidemiology | Population Health |
| Food Science | Soil Science |
| Forest Ecology | Wildlife Ecology |



WELCOME 2019 COHORT!



Student names (left to right): Alejandra Gutierrez, Fernanda Szewc, Aldo Arellano, Marienela Heredia, Abbey Williams, Sara Minemeyer, Emily Eix, Daniel Hayden, Lauren English, Corelle Rokicki, Juan Sanchez, Cristina Paz, Luis Haddock Soto, Ryan Ward, Jorge Guerrero, Bianca Chavez, Juliani Rodriguez, Cristobal Carrera Carriel, Donna Li. Not pictured: Chelsi Almodovar Rivera, Samuel DeGrey, Kaila Javius-Jones, Jose Moran, Thomas Peterson.

OUR CURRENT STUDENTS SHARE HOW SCIMED GRS IMPACTS THEM...

"The GRS program offers unmatched support and advocacy for students. While you will find community in your program, I found home in my fellow SciMed scholars. From those in my cohort, to older student mentors, these people have been present for Thanksgiving dinners, big birthdays, small research milestones, each resubmission of an application/grant/manuscript, weddings, snowstorms, and defending your research. I found mentors and close friends whom make Wisconsin feel like home."

"SciMed GRS is not only a fellowship program but a community. Close to all of my friends have come from SciMed. It is so nice that all of the different programs are intermingled because everyone has a different perspective and there is never a moment where you will not learn something new. SciMed gives me a sense of home and support that I do not think I could have found anywhere else."

"SciMed GRS is not only a fellowship that provides wonderful opportunities for career advancement and professional development, it is a community for individuals of various diverse backgrounds to find their home at UW-Madison to develop and grow not only as a knowledgeable and trained scientist, but as a fully developed individual capable of entering society ready to continue and complete their goals."

"SciMed GRS has provided me with a family and a community of fellow colleagues that understand that graduate school is hard, but we help each other through it."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: FOLA AROWOLO



are researching. SciMed has made my graduate school experience more fulfilling.

Tell us about your research.

My research is focused on understanding the deleterious effects of compounds known as lipid oxidation products (LOP). These compounds are ubiquitous in the Western diet via high heat cooking (i.e. deep fat frying) and food processing. In small scale in vitro studies, these compounds have been shown to have toxic effects on various cell types. Due to the increasing prevalence of the Western diet globally and thus the increased prevalence of these compounds, I've been interested in understanding the biological effects of LOP, particularly its effects on the gastrointestinal and adipose environments. Additionally, LOPs are widely consumed by livestock so I am also interested in how the consumption of these products may impact meat quality.

How did you get into science?

I got into science because I've always been a curious person. At a young age, I've always wanted to understand why and how things work. I would beg my parents to buy anything related to science - ranging from lab kits to dinosaur sets that I would assemble for fun. Thankfully, I've had teachers and professors in my life that continued to nurture my interest in science.



Fola in his garden standing next to one of the tallest sunflowers he's ever seen.



Fola in the cell culture room evaluating the degree of differentiation in adipocytes using a confocal microscope.

What do you think is the most rewarding part about being a scientist?

I think that the most rewarding part about being a scientist is contributing knowledge to society. In the Information Age, some would assume that we know all there is to know. However, that is far from the truth. Being a scientist is like working on a jigsaw puzzle and creating a small piece to slowly complete it. Sometimes that puzzle feels like it has one billion pieces which may seem daunting but I love the challenge.

"I AM SO THANKFUL TO HAVE THIS COMMUNITY THAT HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN MY SUCCESS."

Where do you see yourself after graduating?

I am currently applying for clinical chemistry fellowships. This is considered a "nontraditional" or "alternative" career path from academia. I chose this career path because my research exposed certain gaps in clinical research that I'd like to explore. Although I love basic science research, this opportunity would give me a chance to have a direct impact on patients in the clinic.

Graduate Program: Molecular and Environmental Toxicology

SciMed GRS: 2014 Cohort

Advisor: Dr. Dhanansayan Shanmuganayagam

What is your favorite part about being part of the SciMed Community?

My favorite part of being a member of the SciMed GRS community is being surrounded by people that have shared experiences and interests. When I first arrived in Madison, I was welcomed into the community with open arms. I was incredibly grateful for that because it is easy to feel isolated in graduate school. I am so thankful to have this community that has played a pivotal role in my success.

Do you feel you get both an academic and personal value from SciMed GRS?

Absolutely! Being a member of the SciMed GRS community has enhanced my academic and personal life. From seminars to big group meetings to workshops, I've been exposed to a wide breadth of subjects that has bolstered my career trajectory. I also enjoy hearing about what my fellow SciMed members

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ZULMARIE PEREZ HORTA, PHD



Graduate Program:
Cellular and
Molecular Pathology
SciMed GRS: 2011
Cohort
Current Employer:
Howard Hughes
Medical Institute
(HHMI)

Tell us a little about yourself?

I am latino scientist who is applying her skills and knowledge to support science education around the country and in Latin American countries. I am very passionate about professional development for scientists, science education, increasing diversity in STEM fields and science policy.

Can you describe your research in a few sentences?

In my current position, I am part of the BioInteractive team, a program that seeks to improve science education by developing free, high quality resources to be used by high school and undergraduate educators based on research using the power of story telling to explore complex concepts to make science accessible to our audience.

"DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE ALL THE SKILLS THAT YOU ARE ACQUIRING OUTSIDE OF THE LAB, AS THEY CAN BE THE TIPPING POINT FOR YOU!"

How did SciMed prepare you for your position?

SciMed GRS was instrumental in my graduate career, it provided me with leadership and professional development opportunities that allowed me to acquire, develop and market my transferable skills. Being chair of the SciMed Outreach Committee was one of the most enriching experiences for me. I was able to give back to the community and grow as a leader, organizing and leading meetings and events, managing multiple projects and people, handling difficult conversations - all examples that I still bring up on job interviews.

What are some of the biggest challenges (or achievements) you faced in your new career?

Transitioning from lab work to office work can take some time to get used to, it's a whole different rhythm and culture that you have to learn. In addition, both jobs that I have had out of graduate school have been in completely different fields, thus they had a learning curve to get familiar with the background, terminology and feel like I could contribute. What I have learned, is that most things are learned on the job. Your PhD

teaches you to do the research and become well-versed in a topic in little time, to think critically and problem solve, and this is something that you will continue to do in every position that you have.

What advice do you have for new graduates?

Network, network, network! I know that this sounds like old news, but don't underestimate the power of networking. If you are introverted like me, and presenting yourself to random people at happy hour is your worst nightmare, schedule informational interviews! Reach out to people whose positions interest you and ask for 30 minutes of their time to talk about their career path, job experience and advice for someone wanting to go into that field. This can be in person, via video chat or over the phone. Do not be afraid, people are always excited to talk about themselves and to help out. I have found that these one-on-one interactions have opened my eyes to new interests and shown me doors to more opportunities. Also, when preparing your resume, think about everything that you've done, not just the lab work and the technical skills, but consider every volunteer experience, committee you've served on, and extracurricular leadership position you've held. These are the experiences that will set you apart from the rest. If you don't have a lot of these, get yourself out there! Volunteer, sign up, apply, get involved!

What prepared you to land your current position? What do you recommend current SciMed GRS students do to pursue that route?

My current position involves leading the translation of 500+ resources on the BioInteractive webpage. This involves managing translators and copy-editors, serving as scientific editor, developing workflows, communicating through social media, and outreach initiatives to educators in Puerto Rico and other spanish speaking countries. Previous volunteer work with a non-profit organization where I translated, edited, and posted blog content provided me with the right experiences and talking points for my interview. Do not underestimate all the skills that you are acquiring outside of the lab, as they can be the tipping point for you!

What is next for you?

I just started at HHMI as a Science Education Fellow 3 months ago, so I am very much still in the learning phase. I look forward to the next few years of learning and growing in this position. Particularly, I am passionate about the outreach work my team does to provide professional learning experiences for educators, and hope to enable communications in Puerto Rico to make these opportunities available to teachers there!



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

SCIMED SPEAKS

SciMed Speaks is a presentation platform for SciMed GRS scholars to create short, engaging storytelling experiences for general audiences on scientific topics of interest. Our 2018-19 speakers, Lena Vincent and Esteban Quinones gave excellent talks that showcased their exciting research.

LENA VINCENT

How I Built My Own
Interdisciplinary
PhD Program to Study
the Origins of Life"



ESTEBAN QUIÑONES

We've Come A Long
Way Together: A Review
of Global Poverty
Trends



SCIMED GRS KICKOFF MEETING

The SciMed community gathered together at the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year to reconnect, enjoy bowling and pizza, and to hear all about the SciMed GRS events and activities planned for the upcoming year.



2018 WINTER GATHERING

SciMed graduate students, friends, and families joined together over food, holiday treats, hot chocolate, and crafts during the annual winter gathering to celebrate the end of the fall semester and the holiday season. This year the craft was a Gingerbread house building competition!



Congrats to the winners of the Gingerbread House competition for their impressive upside down house!



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

2019 ANNUAL POSTER SESSION

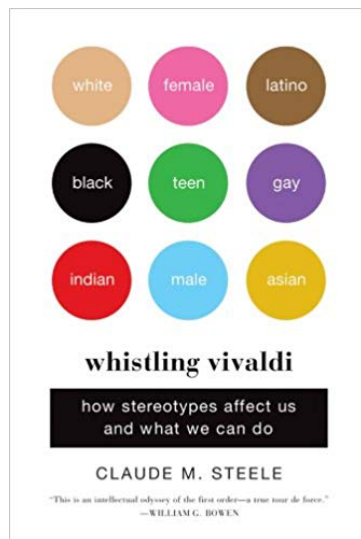
SciMed GRS scholars showcased their research during the annual SciMed Poster Session at the Wisconsin Institutes of Discovery.



**CONGRATS TO
CORRI HAMILTON
FOR WINNING THE BEST
POSTER AWARD!**

Each year we have faculty members judge student posters. Corri impressed the judges with her fantastic poster and the clarity in her presentation.

SCIMED GRS BOOK GROUP: WHISTLING VIVALDI



In the Spring, a group of SciMed scholars led by Dee Robinson (Microbiology, 2015 cohort) decided to start a book club with the goal to come together and read a book that was of interest to them, and to provide a space to share and discuss their thoughts and reflections. They read "Whistling Vivaldi" by Claude Steele. It is an excellent and important piece of work about stereotype threat, how stereotype threat is cultivated (particularly in academic settings), how it can affect anyone, and ways in which we can start to overcome it.

ALUMNI CAMPUS RESOURCE: SARA STEVENS, PHD & DATAHUB



Sara Stevens is a UW-Madison PhD graduate and SciMed GRS alum. She is currently the Data Science Hub Facilitator where she facilitates connections and trains researchers in data science. In spring she presented to a group of SciMed students on all of the resources her group provides, and how to get connected with their workshops and courses.

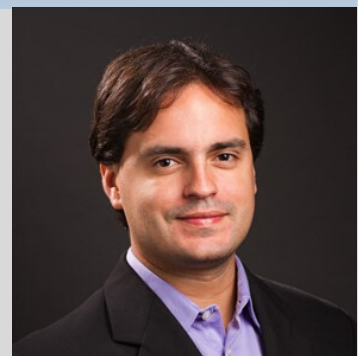


For more information on their trainings and workshops, visit <https://hub.datascience.wisc.edu>

INVITED SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT: DR. DANIEL COLÓN-RAMOS

DEVELOPING YOUR PASSION FOR SCIENCE

Dr. Colón-Ramos was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He works with *C. elegans* as a means of advancing knowledge of the fundamental building blocks of the nervous system. He also dedicates himself to improving opportunities in STEM for people in Puerto Rico. In 2006, he launched a non-profit called CienciaPR.org, a resource network for all those who are interested in science and Puerto Rico, along with building connections among Puerto Rican scientists.



DR. SARA PATTERSON RETIRES



DR. SARA PATTERSON

Previous SciMed GRS
Director

Emile Steiger UW
Distinguished Teaching
Professor

Emeritus Professor,
Department of
Horticulture

In 2007, Dr. Sara Patterson was asked to be the Faculty Director of the initiative that would become the SciMed GRS Program. The program started small with just 18 students, a program coordinator and a dedicated group of student leaders. It grew and developed in the last decade to produce 163 alumni and supports over 130 graduate students annually. During this same time, the enrollment of underrepresented minority students in the thirty-eight programs affiliated with SciMed GRS increased from five percent to twelve percent, demonstrating the broader reach of the program's influence.

The success of the program and students was nurtured by Sara's welcoming nature, endless commitment and strong rapport with students. Dr. Patterson worked on a daily basis to retain and support students through difficult situations and circumstances. She had individual meetings with students discussing strategies to navigate academic situations, balancing academics and personal responsibilities, connecting with resources/opportunities, and other situations impacting transition or success in graduate school. Every fall, Dr. Patterson welcomed students for dinner at her house, offering a welcoming space for new and old students to engage and build friendships that last beyond graduate school.

We are grateful for Sara's 10 years of incredible commitment and enthusiasm with the SciMed GRS Community. She opened her doors welcoming students, helped students in need, and provided exceptional professional guidance and support for many. Sara has been an unwavering advocate for students and colleagues and has shared boundless energy, generosity and her many gifts with the SciMed community. Sara will surely be missed but her impact with SciMed GRS will be lasting. We wish her all the best in her retirement! Sara will be spending her retirement in the Pacific Northwest and would love for you to keep in touch! She misses you all and welcomes emails and visits in Seattle or when in Wisconsin. You can reach her at: spatters@wisc.edu



DR. PATTERSON RECEIVES THE 2019 CALS EQUITY & DIVERSITY AWARD

This award recognizes individuals for efforts to advance academic and professional climate of diversity, respect, inclusion, and equity in the college. Congratulations Dr. Patterson!



SCIMED GRS STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



DR. BETH MEYERAND NAMED NEW SCIMED GRS DIRECTOR

Beth Meyerand is a professor of medical physics and biomedical engineering. Beth holds a B.S. in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry from Yale; an M.S. in Biomedical Engineering from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and a PhD in Biophysics from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Beth has been a faculty member at UW-Madison for 20 years and has held numerous leadership and service positions. Beth has experience in administration as well as supporting underrepresented groups, including serving as BME chair and directing the department's graduate program; leading NIH-funded pre- and post-doctoral training programs; and serving on Equity and Diversity Committees. It's Beth's goal to help grow the program, while maintaining its current strengths. She wants to explore opportunities to offer SciMed GRS students leadership/management training; help students understand the wide variety of career paths available to them; and encourage them to get training in teaching.

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW DIRECTOR:

"I am absolutely thrilled and honored to have the position of Director, and I look forward very much to getting to know each of you, and to learn how I can help you to reach your graduate education goals. I'm excited to have this opportunity to make a significant, positive difference in the lives of SciMed GRS students. I've seen the enormous benefit the program has made in the lives of the GRS students who have graduated from my own lab. The program is so much more than just a stipend. It gives students a sense of community, and a support system, both of which are critically important at a campus like UW-Madison, which is not as diverse as we'd like it to be."



MICHELLE PARMENTER AS NEW SCIMED GRS COORDINATOR

Michelle earned her PhD in Genetics from UW-Madison in 2017. She received a B.S. in Biology from the University of Oregon. Being from a first-generation low-income family, she credits her path and success to a few key mentors. She has mentored many students throughout her career, leading her to pursue a career in student services, with an emphasis in supporting underrepresented students. Michelle began working with SciMed GRS as Program Assistant in 2017. Working with SciMed GRS aligns both of her passions: mentoring and science. She is excited to continue her passion of providing students with a space of support and community. She hopes that her background, along with her experience in graduate school in the biosciences and with SciMed GRS will bring a useful perspective to the program.

ABBEY THOMPSON AWARDED THE 2019 CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

This award recognizes a UW-Madison professional for outstanding service excellence. Over the last 10 years, Abbey has been relentlessly committed to the SciMed GRS program. Dedication, ingenuity, creativity, and unfailing enthusiasm perfectly describe Abbey and her career with SciMed GRS. Congratulations to Abbey for this prestigious award!

"Abbey is incredibly innovative yet totally realistic in terms of what she asks of others; her creativity, insight, energy and dedication are amazing." - Dr. Sara Patterson





CONGRATULATIONS 2019 GRADUATES!

Adam Bolton
PhD, Plant Breeding & Plant Genetics

Kenna Degner
PhD, Endocrinology & Rep. Physiology

Liz Garcia-Peterson
PhD, Molecular & Env. Toxicology

Alba Katiria Gonzalez Rivera
PhD, Biophysics

Diana Guzmán Colón
PhD, Wildlife Ecology

Marielle Kouassi
MS, Food Science

Nadia Khan
PhD, Cellular & Molecular Biology

Walatta Mesquitta
PhD, Molecular & Cellular Pharmacology

Marissa Munoz
MS, Pharmaceutical Sciences

Yousra Ali Mohamoud
PhD, Population Health Sciences

Michelle Pearson
PhD, Cellular & Molecular Biology

Ricardo Rivera
PhD, Forest Ecology

Esteban Quiñones
PhD, Agricultural & Applied Economics

Lorraine Rodriguez Bonilla
PhD, Plant Breeding & Plant Genetics

James Romero
PhD, Cellular & Molecular Pathology

Tomás Rush
PhD, Plant Pathology

Emmanuel Vasquez-Rivera
PhD, Molecular & Env. Toxicology

Jessica Vazquez
PhD, Endocrinology & Rep. Physiology

UPDATES FROM OUR ALUMNI...

ALEJANDRA HUERTA, PHD

NEW POSITION:
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

MICHELLE PEARSON, PHD

NEW POSITION:
TENURE TRACK INSTRUCTOR
SPOKANE FALLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

NADIA KHAN, PHD

NEW POSITION:
POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER & K99 AWARD RECIPIENT
ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI

ESTEBAN QUIÑONES, PHD

NEW POSITION:
RESEARCHER
INTERNATIONAL DIVISION AT MATHEMATICA POLICY
RESEARCH

CONGRATS TO ESTEBAN QUIÑONES AND FOLA AROWOLO FOR THEIR INDUCTION INTO THE BOUCHET GRADUATE HONOR SOCIETY



The Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society seeks to develop a network of scholars who exemplify academic and personal excellence, foster environments of support, and serve as examples of scholarship, leadership, character, service, and advocacy for students who have been traditionally underrepresented. Each year, the Graduate School awards a limited number of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers to become members of the National Bouchet Graduate Honor Society.

SCIMED AT 2019 SACNAS!



SciMed GRS students Carolina Mendoza, Jonas Rodriguez, Sofia Romero, Patrick Cervantes, Jenna Lin, Kevin Coe, Troy King Jr., Edrees Rashan, Nik Santistevan, Anna Marie Rowell, Raisa Nunez, and SciMed GRS staff Beth Meyerand and Abbey Thompson attended the 2019 SACNAS conference in Honolulu, Hawaii.

COLLABORATOR HIGHLIGHT: STEVEN GILES, PHD



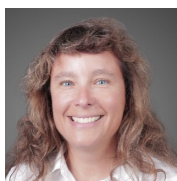
Steven Giles, Ph.D is the founder of Big Rose Web Design. He received his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and did his postdoctoral studies at Duke University. As a graduate student he was supported as an Advanced Opportunity Fellow (now known as SciMed GRS Fellowship). In 2010, Steven declined a tenure track faculty position and founded Big Rose Web Design. Big Rose builds custom laboratory information management systems for academic clients ranging in size from single investigators to multiple investigator projects. SciMed GRS is grateful for Steve's recent generous donation of services and expertise to improve our web design and data management, and continued collaboration with SciMed GRS.



SCIMED AT 2019 ABRCMS!

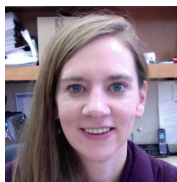


SciMed GRS students Sierra Love, Lauren English, Jose Martinez, Rashaun Williams, Luis Torres, Donny Hoang, Alexius Lampkin, Anna Marie Rowell, Jennifer Lin, and SciMed GRS staff Michelle Parmenter attended the 2019 ABRCMS conference in Anaheim, CA.



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Support SciMed Graduate Research Scholars

I/We wish to join other students/alumni/industry/friends in enhancing service opportunities in the SciMed GRS Program by contributing as indicated below. Please make checks payable to: UW Foundation-Science & Medicine Graduate Research Scholars. Contributions can also be made online through the SciMed GRS website: <http://scimedgrs.wisc.edu>

☐ Enclosed in my/our contribution of \$ _____ I choose to specifically designate my gift for the following:

- ☐ The greatest need of the program
- ☐ Student support (travel to conferences, etc.)
- ☐ Programmatic events including invited speakers

☐ I wish to pledge \$ _____ each year for ____ years beginning _____ (year).

Please remind me to pay the annual amount I have pledged in _____ month(s)

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Card Number: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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We welcome any questions,
comments, and updates!

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