

INFINITY SCHOLARS: National Science Foundation S-STEM DUE 0728539)

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Continuation Award: \$120,000 in scholarships

Project Period: 08/01/07-07/31/11

Current Year: Project year 2 of 4

This project will provide financial assistance, academic support and career exploration to **35** full-time **STEM transfer and related career-focused degree program majors**.

Goal 1: Improve educational opportunities for students interested in STEM careers.

Goal 2: Increase student retention to degree achievement.

Goal 3: Increase impact of student support for students enrolled in STEM disciplines.

Goal 4: Increase numbers of well educated and skilled employees in STEM careers of national need.

A Core Team will use a selection matrix to award up to \$4,000 annually to talented, financially needy STEM majors. Creating a learning community and providing the tools for success will be accomplished through intentional *Infinity Scholars* project activities. All participants will complete a job shadow and/or internship experience during the freshman year and complete a Capstone experience during the sophomore year.

Intellectual Merit: Research-based retention strategies and project activities will provide participants with the academic and career exploration support necessary to successfully transfer to a university or transition to the workforce. The Principal Investigators will partner with the Iowa Lakes Institutional Research Office to track similarities and disconnects among participants and a control group.

Broader Impact will be realized through development of internships, job shadow experiences, and Capstone activities. National employment demand for two-year degree STEM graduates drives this project. Local industry partners eagerly await the potential employment pool, which will be available at the end of the first project year. In addition, alignment of curricular competencies and strengthening articulations with neighboring transfer universities will provide students pursuing a four-year degree with a seamless transition. **Project activities are a direct result of Iowa Lakes NSF CSEMS DUE 0202123.** Blending academic and support services through project strategies will increase retention and serve as a replicable model for other colleges. New knowledge and discoveries will be made available to interested organizations.