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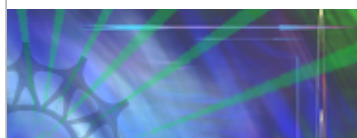
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## Award Abstract #1644034

## Scholarships for Advancing Careers in the Life Sciences

**NSF Org:** [DUE](#)  
[Division Of Undergraduate Education](#)

**Initial Amendment Date:** February 8, 2017

**Latest Amendment Date:** March 27, 2020

**Award Number:** 1644034

**Award Instrument:** Standard Grant

**Program Manager:** Paul Tymann  
DUE Division Of Undergraduate Education  
EHR Direct For Education and Human Resources

**Start Date:** March 1, 2017

**End Date:** February 28, 2022 (Estimated)

**Awarded Amount to Date:** \$998,969.00

**Investigator(s):** Suazette Mooring [smoothing@gsu.edu](mailto:smoothing@gsu.edu) (Principal Investigator)  
Paulos Yohannes (Co-Principal Investigator)  
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Janice Fournillier (Co-Principal Investigator)  
Barbara Baumstark (Former Co-Principal Investigator)

**Sponsor:** Georgia State University Research Foundation, Inc.  
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**NSF Program(s):** S-STEM-Schlr Sci Tech Eng&Math

**Program Reference Code(s):** 9178, 9179

**Program Element Code(s):** 1536

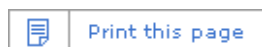
### ABSTRACT

This project will provide scholarship support for academically talented, low-income students majoring in Biology, Chemistry or Neuroscience at Georgia State University. 60 upper-division undergraduate students and 18 Masters students will be supported. Half of the undergraduate students will be drawn from enrolled students at Georgia State, with the remainder of the students recruited from transfer students from Perimeter College, a 2-year institution within Georgia State University. The focus of the program is to prepare students to enter graduate school or the STEM workforce. One unique feature of the program is the intent to support students beyond their undergraduate education into a 5th year Masters; completion of a Masters degree has been shown to substantially increase earning potential in the workforce. The program will provide a comprehensive set of

activities and opportunities for development of academic and research skills, with the goal of increasing student self-efficacy. Students will engage in cohort-building activities such as a separate orientation specifically for them and text-based communication within the cohort. They will also participate in faculty mentoring, career planning through creation of Individual Development Plans, enhanced research opportunities, seminar courses and workshops, and facilitation of industry connections. Outside of the program, Georgia State provides additional services including career services, financial counseling, and academic advising to ensure student success on campus and after graduation. Students will be assessed for participation and completion of program activities, as well as for academic achievement and progress both within the program and following graduation.

The objectives of the project are to: 1) retain and graduate upper-division undergraduates and Masters scholars in the Life Sciences, 2) develop the essential skills to be competitive in the workplace or graduate school, 3) build a sense of community through structured faculty mentorship and peer engagement, 4) study and report the impact of the implemented support structures on student self-efficacy, graduation and retention rates, and 5) strengthen institutional practices for the retention and graduation of talented, low-income students. This S-STEM program builds on four support structures currently available on the Georgia State University campus and six support structures developed specifically for this program. These support structures include cohort building, faculty mentoring, career planning, enhanced research, seminar courses and workshops, and industry connections. These support elements are designed to develop six targeted skills in program students - metacognitive skills, data analysis, problem solving, technical/lab skills, presentation skills, and scientific writing. These support structures and the enhanced skill sets of the students are hypothesized to improve their self-efficacy and eventual persistence in STEM careers. The program design and research study will be guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) that predicts how variables such as support structures, self-efficacy, career outcome expectation, and goals affect students' career choices. This program will use a mixed-methods approach to examine how the proposed support structures affect these SCCT variables, graduation, and persistence in STEM-related careers. Given the diversity and unique demographic profile of Georgia State University, this study will advance knowledge about how certain supports affect the career choices for low-income students, underrepresented minorities, and first-generation students.

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