

To: Whom It May Concern

Date: February 17, 2017

Re: Office of Higher Education, Summer Academic Enrichment Program

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From: Robert C. Johnson, Ph.D., Professor, Ethnic and Women's Studies, and Director

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education's Summer Academic Enrichment Program has been vital and very beneficial in our work to sustain and increase the educational opportunities for low-income, female and underrepresented students, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related fields (STEM). Our programs are specifically designed to be affordable and accessible to these students. Over the past 30 years we have served these groups of students, meeting our objectives, which are primarily to expose students to the STEM disciplines and to encourage their participation in higher education. The attached article describes the three programs that constitute the SCSU Summer Pipeline Programs, our operations and outcomes for the period 1987 to 2010.

Since 2011, with the inception of the Summer Academic Enrichment Program scholarships, we have used this resource to offer more targeted students the chance to improve their lives, to increase the likelihood of academic success, and to have an enriching academic experience.

Our programs attract students from across the United States and from other countries, with many families and educators seeking to place learners in these programs, recognizing the quality, value, rigor, and preparedness they represent. They pay program fees and travel expenses to send their children to these programs. Yet, over this period of time, 96 percent of our participants are Minnesota residents, representing many parts of the state, scores of cities and towns, dozens of school districts, and hundreds of schools.

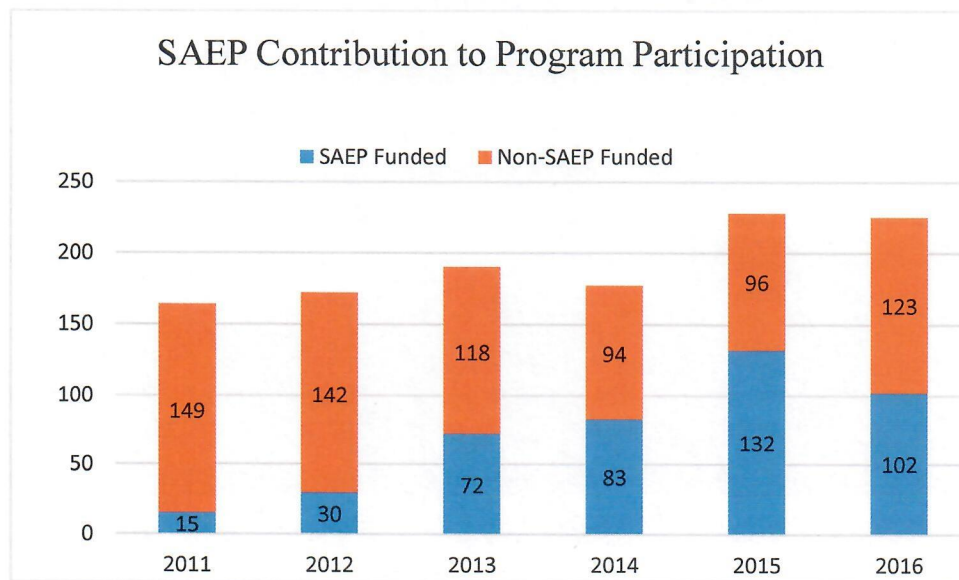
This scholarship program has allowed Minnesota youth to benefit from this resource that is in their own home state. Low-income students to get a high-quality, world-class educational experience, an experience that opens other doors to other opportunities such as:

- Higher education enrollment
- Scholarships
- Awards, honors and recognition
- International contacts

These are some of the benefits that Pipeline Program participants report or that we document from research. Based on their work in our programs, students have been invited to present at an international science conference; received a Donaldson Award from the Science Museum of Minnesota;; been admitted to a variety of colleges and universities. Through this program, low- and middle-income students from underrepresented backgrounds can avail themselves of the same resources and preparation that their more affluent peers can afford to secure.

One of our participants from an affluent family has been granted early admission to Princeton University, and is being considered for Harvard and Yale Universities. According to her father, her participation and research work over several summers was a key factor in her academic achievement. This young scholar worked side-by-side with many less-affluent students. Thus, they received the same quality, rigorous research experience as their more affluent peers, one that will also serve them well. The attached PowerPoint and the afore-mentioned article prove more details and descriptions of the Pipeline Programs and their contributions to student success.

As the graph below indicates, the summer academic enrichment scholarship program has allowed more students to experience and benefit from these offerings.



We had many other students who qualified for the scholarship but were not awarded funds because there was insufficient funding to meet the request of all applicants. We still accepted and served these students. With the increased needs and the changing demographics of the student population in Minnesota, we will be well served to give as many children an opportunity to improve their life chances and to be contributing members of our society as we can.

In sum, I endorse without reservation the request to fund the Summer Academic Enrichment Program because it is an investment in our future. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information or analysis.