

MRSEC-Millennium Scholar Partnership



The Millennium Scholars program at Penn State, initiated in fall 2012, is increasing the representation of minorities and women in science and engineering by preparing diverse undergraduates for their pursuit and future achievement of a PhD. Modeled after the Meyerhoff Scholars program at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, scholars are expected to maintain academic excellence with the support of a strong learning community. This expectation includes research experiences every summer and an academic thesis with a faculty adviser who encourages ongoing research activities throughout the academic year. Starting these experiences during the first year and following summer is key to student retention and success. MRSEC faculty engage with first year scholars via a Mixer event and follow-up in-person meetings to expose them to exciting research in materials science, and invite them to apply for a research project position with them. Additionally, MRSEC faculty serve as mentors and presenters at weekly seminars.

In 2014 (as in 2013), the MRSEC supported 5 first-year summer research experiences for scholars from Cohort #1 and 1 first-year summer research experience for a scholar from Cohort #2. MRSEC faculty assisted 2 other scholars in obtaining positions at other Universities (MIT and within the NINN network – UC Santa Barbara and University of Minnesota). MRSEC faculty currently host a total of 11 students (from both Cohort #1 and #2) in their labs for their academic thesis.