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Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation Funds Howard Hughes Medical Institute Award

Funding Approved for Medical Research Fellows Program; Online Application Opens Aug. 25

FAIRFAX, Va.—The Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation launched a major new collaboration created with an eye toward the future of the specialty with its announcement that it will provide funding for one medical student conducting preclinical research in interventional radiology during 2012–13 in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s (HHMI) prestigious Medical Research Fellows Program.

“The SIR Foundation, which seeks to further the growth of minimally invasive medicine into new areas of discovery, hopes to encourage talented students with an interest in interventional radiology to apply for acceptance into this exceptional program,” commented Gordon McLennan, M.D., FSIR, chair of the SIRF board of directors. “Funding this initiative follows the SIR Foundation’s mission of fostering research in interventional radiology for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge, increasing the number of skilled investigators, and developing innovative therapies that lead to improved patient care and quality of life,” added McLennan, an interventional radiologist with the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio.

“Interventional radiologists are researchers whose trademark is discovery,” said SIR President Timothy P. Murphy, M.D., FSIR, who represents the national society of nearly 4,700 doctors, scientists and allied health professionals dedicated to improving health care through minimally invasive treatments. “Access to programs such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Medical Research Fellows Program unlocks doors for a new generation of minimally invasive specialists,” added Murphy, an interventional radiologist and director of the Vascular Disease Research Center at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence.

“At its core, this distinguished program gives talented students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the investigative process, increase their aptitude for research, collaborate directly with faculty and strengthen their dedication to a career in medical, biological or life sciences,” said Filip Banovac, M.D., SIRF research policy division chair. Banovac, an interventional radiologist with Georgetown University Hospitals, Washington, D.C., noted that HHMI funds up to 66 applicants, and SIRF’s commitment allows for the funding of one high-achieving, medical student engaged in full-time research at the interface of the disciplines of science, medicine and engineering. HHMI also has collaborations with other organizations to fund additional students.

The HHMI Medical Research Fellows Program enables medical, dental, and veterinary students from schools in the U.S. to spend a year conducting basic, translational or applied biomedical research full time at any school or nonprofit research institution in the United States—except at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md. Research may be conducted abroad if the fellow’s mentor is affiliated with a U.S. institution. Selected fellows receive a stipend and fellow’s and research allowances.

The HHMI fellowship application process requires that applicants have selected a solid biomedical research project (either new or ongoing) and established a relationship with a mentor who has strong grant support and a solid training and publications track record. The application deadline is Jan. 11, 2012. A multilevel evaluation and review process will determine the program’s final awardees. Acceptance letters are expected to be sent out in March 2012; the year-long fellowship will begin in the summer of 2012. Students may apply during any year of medical school; however, applicants in the last year of medical school must defer graduation until completion of the fellowship.

For more information on eligibility and to review the application requirements and procedures, visit www.hhmi.org/medfellowships or e-mail medfellows@hhmi.org. To learn more about the SIR Foundation’s funding support, contact Molly Astudillo, SIR research and grants manager, by phone at (703) 460-5580 or by e-mail at mastudillo@SIRweb.org.

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About the Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation

SIR Foundation is a scientific foundation dedicated to fostering research and education in interventional radiology for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge, increasing the number of skilled investigators in interventional radiology and developing innovative therapies that lead to improved patient care and quality of life. Visit www.SIRFoundation.org.

Local interviews are available by contacting SIR's communications department staff: Ellen Acconcia, SIR communications manager/practice areas, eaconcia@SIRweb.org, (703) 460-5582, or Maryann Verrillo, SIR director of communications and public relations, mverrillo@SIRweb.org, (703) 460-5572.