

3-6-2000

UD's School of Engineering Gets \$220,000 Grant for Scholarships

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

"UD's School of Engineering Gets \$220,000 Grant for Scholarships" (2000). *News Releases*. 8945.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/8945

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.



March 6, 2000
Contact: Jim Pickering
pickering@udayton.edu

NEWS RELEASE

UD'S SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING GETS \$220,000 GRANT FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton's School of Engineering has received a \$220,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to provide scholarships for its engineering students, with an emphasis on women and minorities.

The two-year grant was awarded on the basis of the school's success in developing academic and social support programs, such as its Minority Engineering Program, that have increased recruitment and retention rates.

"The grant will certainly have a positive impact for us," said Richard Kee, associate dean of UD's School of Engineering. "This will provide financial help to at least 40 students in each of the two years. It's a big boost to our program."

UD's grant is one of about 100 awarded this year by the NSF under its Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics Scholarships program. The CSEMS program, which received 284 proposals, provided an estimated \$21 million in grants this year.

During the 1990s, UD's School of Engineering — like most U.S. engineering schools — was confronted with dipping enrollment and retention rates of its students. Because UD's first-year retention rates were especially low (an average under 70 percent), the school decided to target first-year engineering students, Kee explained.

"We conducted a survey of students leaving the program after the first year to find out why they were leaving," Kee said. Exiting students indicated three major reasons: difficulty with calculus, chemistry and physics; lack of association with other engineering students and faculty the first year; and inadequate first-year advising.

To increase enrollment and first-year retention rates, the School of Engineering created several programs that emphasize student development and academic support during a student's first year. These programs consist of the First-Year Program, designed to assist all first-year students; the Enriched Engineering Program, designed to recruit and retain "at-risk" students who would not normally be permitted to enroll in engineering because of low ACT or

- over -

SAT scores; the MEP, designed to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities; and the Introduction to Engineering Design course, which provides all first-year students with an overview of all engineering fields offered in a laboratory environment at UD.

Some of the elements of those programs, Kee said, include collaborative learning workshops; cohorted classes — junior and senior engineering students as tutors — in calculus, chemistry and physics; specialized advising; professional development sessions; and professional mentors paired with students, Kee said.

Results indicate these programs have had a significant impact on recruitment and retention in the engineering school, Kee said. Overall, the admission rate in the School of Engineering rose 24 percent over the last two years and the first-year retention rate has increased from 69.5 percent in the early 1990s to 80 percent for the entering first-year class of 1998.

And the MEP program also has been quite successful, Kee said. As an example, the first MEP class (fall 1997) had 10 of 14 students returning for a retention rate of 71 percent. Twenty students entered the program in 1997 with 17 returning in the fall 1998 for a retention rate of 85 percent. Twenty-eight students are enrolled in the MEP program this year.

The School of Engineering was awarded the grant because it is “fully committed to student success through such activities as the Enriched Engineering Program,” grant committee members wrote in their summary. “This is a strong proposal to provide financial assistance to students enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs in engineering in conjunction with a variety of innovative student development (programs) and academic support activities.”

Specifically, the NSF committee commended the School of Engineering for giving its faculty more time to interact with students, providing real-life work experiences with local industry and for keeping small student-to-faculty ratios.

In each of the two years of the grant, scholarships will benefit 40 UD engineering students, with special consideration given to minorities and women, underrepresented groups in engineering fields.

“Of the currently enrolled students who would qualify for a scholarship, 18 percent are members of under-represented minority groups and 22 percent are female,” Kee said.

The NSF funds research and education in science and engineering through grants, contracts and cooperative agreements. The foundation accounts for about 20 percent of federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

- 30 -

For media interviews, contact **Richard Kee** at (937) 229-2736 or via e-mail at rkee@enr.udayton.edu. For more information on the National Science Foundation and the CSEMS grant, contact **Marilyn Suiter**, program officer, at (703) 306-1625 or via e-mail at msuiter@nsf.gov. Information also can be found at the NSF Web site at www.nsf.gov.