# Monsanto Funds Fellowships for Graduate Students

Monsanto

**ST. LOUIS** (December 15, 2011) – Washington University in St. Louis has received a $930,000 grant from the Monsanto Company to support graduate student research in life sciences.

The grant, to be distributed over the next seven years, will establish a Monsanto graduate fellowship program. Each year, two graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees in the Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (DBBS) will be selected as fellows and receive up to $31,000. Students can receive up to three years of support, beginning after their second year. Life sciences include plant sciences, microbiology, biochemistry, immunology, genetics and other specialties.

Jordan Teisher, a doctoral student in evolution, ecology and population biology, and Jeremy King, a doctoral student in plant biology, have been named the first Monsanto graduate fellows at Washington University.

"Through this fellowship program, Monsanto is giving Washington University graduate students a unique opportunity to be exposed to the breadth of research in life sciences," says Stephen Beverley, PhD, the Marvin A. Brennecke Professor of Microbiology at the School of Medicine and chair of the executive council of the DBBS.

The students will be taught how to run laboratory research programs. As part of the fellowship, Teisher and King will also interact with Monsanto scientists to gain experience in a corporate research environment.

“Investment and improvement in the plant sciences is and will continue to be an integral part of making agriculture more productive,” said Bob Reiter, vice president of biotechnology at Monsanto. “That’s why Monsanto is proud to support the development and education of future life scientists at Washington University.”

Washington University has had a longstanding relationship with Monsanto, with

both the university and company based in St. Louis. In 2000, the University and Monsanto developed a 10-year collaborative agreement to conduct research focused in plant sciences, biotechnology and genetics, nutrition and the environment.

Teisher is studying the evolution of grasses that can survive in extreme conditions and have unique characteristics in photoenergy utilization. Photoenergy is a process that converts energy from light into a form that can be used by living organisms. Teisher is a student in the laboratory of Barbara Schaal, PhD, the Mary-Dell Chilton Distinguished Professor in Arts & Sciences and professor of biology.

King is adapting the energy-harvesting capacity of photosynthetic bacteria from hot springs to improve the efficiency of other photosynthetic organisms, such as plants and algae. Photosynthetic bacteria have the “machinery” to convert the energy from light into chemical energy. King is conducting his research in the laboratory of Robert Blankenship, PhD, the Lucille P. Markey Distinguished Professor in Arts & Sciences and professor of biology.

**About Washington University in St. Louis**

Washington University School of Medicine’s 2,100 employed and volunteer faculty physicians also are the medical staff of Barnes-Jewish and St. Louis Children’s hospitals. The School of Medicine is one of the leading medical research, teaching and patient care institutions in the nation, currently ranked fourth in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Through its affiliations with Barnes-Jewish and St. Louis Children’s hospitals, the School of Medicine is linked to BJC HealthCare.

SOURCE [1]



**Links:**
[1] http://monsanto.mediaroom.com/monsanto-funds-fellowship-for-graduate-students