

BIOSCIENCES INITIATIVE

Expanding the Biological Sciences Scholars Program (BSSP) to all of U-M FAQs

What is the BSSP?

The BSSP is a junior faculty recruiting mechanism operating out of the medical school since 1998. It works to assist search committees recruit candidates of excellence by offering the special designation of Biological Sciences, and by offering top-off funds that can be added to start up packages. These funds are not used to replace start up obligations of the units, but rather to increase these packages to make them more competitive. The BSSP mechanism has been successful in recruiting many of the medical school's top scholars.

Has the BSSP recruited faculty outside the Medical School?

In some years, the BSSP has offered the designation AND BSSP funds to scientists with primary appointments outside the medical school.

How does the BSSP committee choose its scholars?

The BSSP places advertisements in top life sciences journals to generate an application pool. It also routinely reviews assistant professor applications provided by search committees after the BSSP application deadline. The BSSP committee then reviews all of these application in a rolling review process conducted throughout the academic year. Top candidates are typically invited to U-M to present to the BSSP Committee. It is thus effectively a competition among all the most competitive candidates across the university.

How will the Biosciences Initiative help expand the work of the BSSP across the biosciences at U-M?

This year, the BSSP has funding to accept up to four candidates in the medical school. After reviewing this program, the Biosciences Initiative Committee (BICC) voted unanimously to fund up to four additional BSSP candidates with primary appointments in any University unit engaged in bioscience research. The BSSP and medical school have accepted this challenge, and Pres. Schlissel and Provost Philbert have approved this BICC initiative. The BICC has designated up to \$1.6m annually, for three years, to help recruit up to four assistant professors in the biosciences. Successful candidates will be eligible for up to \$400,000 in supplemental start-up funding.

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How will candidates be evaluated for BSSP funding?

The BSSP has agreed to add six new members to their committee to aid in the review of BSSP candidates in disciplines across the breadth of the biosciences at Michigan. Search committees may send candidate applications, along with a cover letter, directly to bsspapply@umich.edu.

What is the goal of the expanded BSSP program?

The goal for this Biosciences Initiative funding is to extend the success of the BSSP program in junior faculty recruiting across the entire biosciences community.

How can units outside the Medical School get job candidates under consideration for the BSSP program?

Search chairs should send candidate application materials directly to bsspapply@umich.edu as soon as qualified candidates are identified, but no later than mid-February, since the committee will be using a rolling application process. Application packets would ideally include a CV, research statement, a NIH Biosketch, and 2 or more letters of reference. If there is any formal feedback from faculty members that have already interacted with the candidate, that information would also be helpful to include.

The BSSP committee has also been provided with a list of searches and search committee chairs. They will contact searches directly if they identify candidates from their application pool they feel are suitable for particular searches, regardless of whether or not they are competitive for the BSSP program. Beginning in 2018, the BSSP will list all schools and colleges in the biosciences as eligible in their advertisement materials.

How will the Biosciences Initiative monitor the work of the BSSP?

The BICC will have final approval of the slate of candidates chosen for Bioscience Initiative funding by the BSSP committee. The BICC will provide administrative support to the BSSP, work to insure efficient communication between all the biosciences searches and the BSSP, and work to insure, over time, that all bioscience units have equal access to competition for BSSP funds.