

Lock Haven University

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Nanotechnology: Small particles, big opportunities

LHU hosts nano events for high school students

Nanotechnology, the science of designing and constructing devices and materials on a very small scale, can open enormous opportunities for students. Lock Haven University is organizing events on campus especially for high school students so that they may discover how nanoscience has opened new career opportunities for them in the sciences.

The nanoscience program at Lock Haven University is based in the sciences that include Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology, Health Sciences, pre-engineering, pre-med, and other Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) disciplines). Dr. Anura Goonewardene, Director of LHU's Nanotechnology program, says "Nanoscience is the cutting edge for interdisciplinary sciences. No matter what branch of science a student pursues, whether it's biology or chemistry or physics or any other branch, nanotechnology has tremendous applications." In addition, students with unmet need at LHU who study nanotechnology and science in conjunction with the LHU Honors program are eligible for a four year Nanoscience Scholarship funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), subject to funding.

Nanoscience Awareness Day will take place on Monday evening, October 3 from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. in Ulmer Hall 232 (Planetarium). Nanotechnology alumni will present what they are doing now and how they have benefited by participating in nanotechnology programs. Some of LHU's graduates who are in M.S. and Ph.D. programs from Engineering to Neuroscience or in industry are expected to make presentations. Participating high school students will have the opportunity to talk with LHU nano alumni and ask questions about the program.

On Friday, November 4, LHU will host a Nanoscience Open House from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. This will be an all-day event for area school districts. Senior/junior high school students from neighboring school districts are invited to this Open House where they will be presented with a tour of nanotechnology labs and an opportunity to meet with LHU nanotechnology students to discuss their ongoing research. High school students will also see a demonstration show by the students of the physics and chemistry clubs. The university will provide lunch for the participating students.

School districts bringing students for the Nanoscience Open House need to register their participation by sending an email to Dr. Goonewardene (agoonewa@lhup.edu). They will then receive a detailed agenda for this event.

Lock Haven University is at the forefront in nanotechnology undergraduate education. At LHU, Nanotechnology is embedded in all its STEM B.S. programs and provides unique opportunities for undergraduates to do cutting edge research in the field. An average of 10 LHU students each year presents their research at national conferences. Our data indicates that 76% of our students participate in research with faculty, an unheard of rate for most universities. LHU also places some of its outstanding juniors at national research universities across the nation for summer research internships that are fully funded; last year 5 LHU students were placed in fully funded research internships.

In addition, the LHU nanotechnology program has a graduate school placement rate of over 50%. Last spring five LHU nano graduates were admitted to Ph.D., M.S., and M.D. programs across the country.

These successes have been recognized by the National Science Foundation through its multiple funding awards to the program since 2008. To date, the NSF has given the LHU nano program grants of over \$700,000. The program has been particularly successful in attracting first generation college students (parents have not attended college) who are part of the underrepresented students in STEM fields. LHU science faculty expect the program's 2012-16 grant from NSF to be renewed for next year (\$500,000+) and if it is, then outstanding students entering LHU in fall 2012 will be eligible to receive scholarships of up to \$10,000 year, depending on their unmet need, for the four years they will take to graduate from the nano program.

Lock Haven University is a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), the largest provider of higher education in the commonwealth. Its 14 universities offer more than 250 degree and certificate programs in more than 120 areas of study. Nearly 405,000 system alumni live and work in Pennsylvania.

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