



Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions

National Renewable Energy Laboratory
University Partnerships Program

Big Picture

To meet the demands of our world's future energy needs in the clean energy transition, the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) is reaching out to the best and brightest engineering and applied science students. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are home to many of these students, and NREL invites them to participate in an enhanced educational and internship experience. Beginning in the summer of 2022, 12 students from two HBCUs and two HSIs are invited to participate in the pilot program. From there, an expanded rollout in year two, and full-scale operations in year three will create an opportunity for 50 of the nation's top minds from leading HBCUs, HSIs, and tribal colleges to lead the clean energy transformation.

Partnering Universities

The pilot program will pair NREL researchers in building technologies, wind energy, and integrated energy solutions with faculty members and undergraduate students from North Carolina A&T (HBCU), Southern University A&M (HBCU), University of New Mexico (HSI), and University of Texas El Paso (HSI). Faculty from each of the schools will recommend a three-student-cohort to participate in the experiential learning program that will have mentorship at its core. Mentorship and professional development go hand in hand with this program as students work alongside NREL researchers throughout the summer and continue with their faculty advisors during the school year. This program enables students to continue contributing to NREL's cutting-edge research while progressing in their studies at their home institutions.

Bridging existing gaps in education, research, and public service to create career pathways for undergraduate students and build long term partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions.



Program Impacts

This is a pivotal moment for the United States to focus on developing the talented future leaders that are studying at HBCUs and HSIs. We need to bridge the gaps that exist in education, research, and public service to create career pathways for undergraduate students and build long-term partnerships with HBCUs and HSIs. Their voices are critical to NREL, and it is imperative that professional development, financial assistance, and a community of care are provided to these students for the program to succeed. When we succeed, we will create a more equitable way for students and faculty to engage in the clean energy economy and develop deeper engagement with universities that have been historically under-represented.

Get Involved

While the need is urgent, thoughtful program design cannot be spared. We are designing a comprehensive program that:

- Covers students' travel and expenses for the 10-week internship
- Provides robust professional development and mentoring that is tailored to students from underrepresented groups
- Offers ongoing support during the academic year for the student and the faculty mentors
- Seeks to develop a program evaluation framework centered on equity and impact to guide future work.

NREL's University Partnerships Program has secured seed funding to cover the start-up of the program, and we are seeking funding to cover the entirety of costs for student's living expenses, as well as research costs.

Contact

Ellen Morris, Ph.D.

Director, University Partnerships Program
university.partnerships@nrel.gov

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