



## ***BRAIN Program FAQ sheet***

### **Eligibility**

#### ***Who is eligible to apply to become a BRAIN Fellow?***

- ❖ An applicant must have a valid U.S. social security number.
- ❖ An applicant must be enrolled as a full time student at a two or four year college or university.
- ❖ An applicant must have a B/C grade point average in science coursework; overall GPA of 2.7 or higher
- ❖ An applicant must be able to attend the entire BRAIN summer program, and may not hold outside employment, nor take other classes while in the program.

#### ***If I am a graduating in May, am I eligible to apply for the BRAIN Program?***

- ❖ Yes. Although preference will be given to rising sophomores, juniors, or seniors, you are still eligible to apply for the BRAIN program if you just graduated.

#### ***If I participated as a BRAIN Fellow in the past may I apply for a second summer?***

- ❖ No.

#### ***Is there an age requirement to participate in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ No, there is not an age requirement. Students must be enrolled full time in a two or four year college or university.

#### ***If I am not from Atlanta, am I eligible to apply for the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ Yes. Applicants from any U.S. college or university may apply.

#### ***Are there any laboratory prerequisites or specific science classes required to participate in the program?***

- ❖ No. There are no specific science classes or laboratory prerequisites required to participate in the BRAIN program.

### **Application**

#### ***Do my recommendation letters have to be turned in by the deadline?***

- ❖ Yes, the recommendation letters must be postmarked by the deadline posted on the website.

#### ***Are there any special forms that I need to download to give to my professor who is writing my recommendation letter?***

- ❖ No. Your professor should write a letter on university or college letterhead stationery explaining why you would be an asset to the BRAIN program and why you would benefit from participating as a BRAIN Fellow.

#### ***Can my professor fax my letter of recommendation?***

- ❖ Yes. Professors may fax letters of recommendation to Veronica Williamson at 404.413.5471. However, they must then follow up with a paper copy by mail in a sealed envelope with a signature across the closure.

#### ***Can my professor email my letter of recommendation?***

- ❖ The CBN Undergraduate Program office would prefer that professors not send an email copy of their letter of recommendation. However, if they do send one in on short notice by you, they should follow up with a paper copy on college or university letterhead stationery sent in a sealed envelope within one week.



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### ***When will I receive notification about my acceptance into the program?***

- ❖ All applicants will receive notification about their decision during the first week of March. Some students will be accepted, some will not be accepted, and some will be placed on a wait-list.

### ***If I do not get accepted into the program this year, can I reapply next year?***

- ❖ Yes. If you do not get accepted into the program this year, you may reapply next year, as long as you still meet the eligibility criteria. You must complete a new application and submit new letters of recommendation.

### ***How competitive is the applicant pool?***

- ❖ Very. There are always significantly more students interested in applying than there are available spaces. If you are not accepted, please consider applying again next year if you are still eligible.

## **Program**

### ***How many students will be selected to participate into the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ Approximately 40 students will be selected to participate in the BRAIN program.

### ***What does a day in the life of a BRAIN Fellow look like?***

- ❖ Upon arrival, Fellows will be greeted by the CBN Undergraduate Program Coordinator and will be given a tour of the campus and provided with initial information.
- ❖ For the first week of the BRAIN program, Fellows will be required to participate in full-day orientation activities. The orientation activities will introduce and/or review basic concepts in neuroscience. They also help Fellows prepare to work in the labs and adjust to the BRAIN program and their peers.
- ❖ For the remainder of the BRAIN program, Fellows will spend most of their time working in labs. BRAIN Fellows will be required to fill out a time sheet and keep a journal of their experiences in the lab. Fellows and their Mentors will discuss the need for any weekend lab work. It is not unusual to work in the lab on the weekends.
- ❖ BRAIN Fellows will also be expected to attend weekly half-day seminars on a variety of topics related to research, careers, and presentation skills.

### ***What will I do with all of the research I am conducting in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ BRAIN Fellows will be expected to present their research in a poster symposium and turn in a research paper at the end of the BRAIN program.

### ***Do Fellows receive a stipend for participating in the program?***

- ❖ Yes. Fellows will receive a stipend of \$3000 for participating in the BRAIN program disbursed in increments through the summer.

### ***When do BRAIN Fellows receive their stipend?***

- ❖ A portion of the stipend will be received partway through the program while Fellows are still working in laboratories. A portion of the stipend will be provided after the end of the program. The final portion of the stipend will be provided during the fall semester after participating in BRAIN when Fellows complete a final follow-up questionnaire. Fellows should not arrive on campus without some way to pay for preliminary expenses before the first portion of the stipend is received partway through the program.

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***Will the BRAIN program provide housing?***

- ❖ Yes the BRAIN program will cover the costs associated with housing. BRAIN Fellows will live in the student apartments on the Clairmont campus of Emory University. However, meals and transportation are not covered by the program. The student apartments are very comfortable and have a kitchen. You will be sharing your apartment with 3 other members of the BRAIN program (single sex apartments).

***Will the BRAIN program provide transportation?***

- ❖ During Orientation, BRAIN Fellows are financially responsible for their daily transportation to and from Emory University. At the welcome to the program, Fellows will be given information on how to access free shuttles to the various metro Atlanta colleges and universities involved in BRAIN. During the research component of the program, Fellows who are not able to use inter-college shuttles will receive fare cards on Atlanta's public transit system (MARTA). A carpool system will also be organized to help Fellows get to their labs.

***Should I bring my car?***

- ❖ It is not required that you have a car but you may find that a car is helpful. A parking deck adjacent to the student apartments will be available for BRAIN Fellows who have a car. There will not be a fee for parking in this deck, but there may be a fee on other campuses.

***May I move into my student apartment earlier than the start of orientation?***

- ❖ No. Move in will be the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and you must be on campus by 3:30 p.m.

***May I stay in my student apartment beyond the end of the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ No. You must vacate your student apartment by noon on Saturday, August 2, the day after the closing luncheon and awards ceremony.

***If I currently live in Atlanta must I stay in the Emory student apartments?***

- ❖ No. It is not mandatory that BRAIN Fellows reside in the provided student apartments, but it is strongly encouraged. Fellows will want to enjoy the opportunities to become friends and colleagues with other BRAIN Fellows. Additionally, local Atlanta traffic problems could prevent a Fellow from arriving promptly at BRAIN events and laboratory duties.

***Can friends of BRAIN Fellows stay in the Fellows' student apartments?***

- ❖ No. Absolutely not.

***Do I have to participate in the entire BRAIN program?***

- ❖ Yes. There is no flexibility in the start and end dates of the program. Only participants who are available for the entire program will be selected and it is expected that all BRAIN Fellows participate in all events and for the entire duration of the program.

***Can I receive academic credit while participating in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ No. BRAIN Fellows receive stipends in lieu of academic credit.

***Can I take academic classes while participating in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ No. Fellows are required to commit their full attention to the BRAIN program.



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### ***Can I keep my other job while participating in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ No. Fellows are required to commit their full attention to the BRAIN program.

### ***What will my research experience be like?***

The BRAIN program offers two different opportunities.

- One option is a format similar to a professional program for practicing scientists offered at Woods Hole, Cold Spring Harbor, or Friday Harbor, in which Fellows work in a single lab facility with a rotating team of outstanding instructors to develop skills using various research techniques such as behavior analysis, pharmacology, electrophysiology, and/or molecular biology.
  - The other option is an individual lab format, in which Fellows work with individual Mentors to join ongoing research projects using techniques available in the Mentors' labs.
- ❖ If you are accepted into the program, you will be placed into either the professional program format or the individual laboratory format by the selection committee. You may decline the offer to attend BRAIN, but you may not request to switch program formats.

### ***If I am admitted to the individual lab format, how will I be paired up with a mentor?***

- ❖ When the application review is completed, the CBN Undergraduate Education selection committee will make suggestions for possible mentor matches.
- ❖ The mentors will have an opportunity to review the applications of the selected students and will be able to choose their top three choices.
- ❖ If you are accepted as a BRAIN Fellow, you will be provided with information about the mentors and will be able to suggest your preference. Please note that the selection committee reserves the right to make the Fellow placements in the laboratories. Once assigned, Fellows cannot request a different Mentor than the one to which they are assigned.
- ❖ A special networking event will be provided to give Fellows and Mentors the opportunity to meet each other.
- ❖ The CBN Undergraduate Program Office will coordinate the Fellow-Mentor matches and will work very hard to make the best matches possible.

### ***What should I do if I am not satisfied with my mentor decision?***

- ❖ If you are not satisfied with the final decision, give it your best shot and try to work in the lab for the first few weeks. If you are still unhappy and would like to switch Mentors, you should first speak with the CBN Undergraduate Program Coordinator to address your concerns. Often, it is possible, with some communication, to make the match work to the Fellow's and the Mentor's advantage. If this strategy does not work, a Fellow can submit a request in writing stating reasons for the need to change Mentors and then the program will work to facilitate that change. Changing mentors should be considered as a last resort.

### ***At which school will I conduct my research?***

- ❖ The CBN is a consortium of seven metro-Atlanta area schools. BRAIN Fellows conduct research in the laboratories of Emory University, Georgia State University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia Institute of Technology, or Morehouse School of Medicine. All institutions have been sites for laboratory experiences in past years of the BRAIN program.



### ***BRAIN Program FAQ sheet***

***Why will I be asked to consent to the use of my survey responses, research presentations, reports, and focus group or interview comments for education research?***

- ❖ CBN faculty members are conducting education research on your experience in the BRAIN program, so that future programs can be designed in ways that are most effective for BRAIN Fellows.
- ❖ In addition, the education research will analyze the cost effectiveness of the two different program formats.

### **Benefits**

***What are the benefits of participating in the BRAIN program?***

- ❖ An intensive, first-class research experience in the biomedical or behavioral sciences.
- ❖ Mentoring from eminent scientists at the CBN member institutions.
- ❖ Guidance in the development of a professional poster and presentation skills that prepare you for making scientific presentations.
- ❖ Weekly seminars on special topics to prepare you for success in research.
- ❖ The opportunity to meet a diverse group of talented students with similar career interests and goals from all over the United States.
- ❖ A chance to make life long friends and memories.
- ❖ Free housing at Emory University during the program and a \$3000 stipend.
- ❖ Living in the vibrant, exciting city of Atlanta and exploring all it has to offer for the duration of the program.
- ❖ Jump-starting your career.