

# Community Academic Scholars Program

Mentor Informational Session  
October 30, 2024



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



# Today:

Program overview

Project themes and examples

Support for community-academic scholars and teams

Project submission process and scholar matching

Academic mentor perspectives: Dr. Raj and Dr. McKenna





# Meet the Community–Academic Scholars Team



**Celina Trujillo, PhD**  
(she/her)  
Research Development Manager



**Maxwell Wallace, MS**  
(he/him)  
Visiting Research Project Coordinator





# PROGRAM OVERVIEW



# Program Model

Scholars conduct research for **10 weeks** during the summer (late May – early August) up to 20 hours per week

Each scholar is supervised by an academic mentor and a community mentor

Each scholar will receive a \$4500 stipend through the CAS program to assist with living expenses

U of I Undergraduate



Academic Mentor



Community-Engaged Research Project



Community Organization





# Project Themes

- Health Equity
- Mental Health
- Poverty
- Education
- Nutrition/Food Security

...and more







# Some Project Types

- Program implementation
- Program evaluation
- Needs and asset assessment

Projects should be developed jointly by academic and community partners and respond to a community need




# Complete list of 2024 Projects

## Community-Academic Scholars

- Community Impact Overview
- Community-Academic Partnerships
- Community-Engaged Funding & Scholarship
- We CU Community Engaged Scholars
- Community-Academic Scholars**
- Student Scholars
- Academic Mentors
- Summer 2021 Projects
- Summer 2022 Projects
- Summer 2023 Projects
- Summer 2024 Projects**
- Community Scholarships
- Mayo Clinic & Illinois


### Empowering students through community-based research

Community-Academic Scholars offers University of Illinois undergraduate students the opportunity to pursue community-based research projects in Urbana-Champaign over the summer.



Project pages include full project descriptions as well as descriptions of the role of the Community-Academic Scholar on the project


[go.illinois.edu/CommunityScholars](https://go.illinois.edu/CommunityScholars)



### Accessible Champaign County: Updating an Accessible Business Evaluation and Developing an Associated Mobile App

The Community-Academic Scholar will work with Special Education Prof. Emily Taronish and Community Choices to consult with community members with disabilities to update an accessible business evaluation and coordinate with the team to turn the digital evaluation into a mobile application.


[Project details](#)



### Assessing the Challenges, Barriers, and Opportunities Associated with Distributing and Sourcing Local Food

The Community-Academic Scholar will work with Recreation, Sport, and Tourism Prof. Sharon Sullivan Zou and the Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development Unit to conduct a nationwide study to assess consumers' awareness, preferences, attitudes, expectations, and willingness-to-pay as related to local food dining consumption.


[Project details](#)



### Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Program

The Community-Academic Scholar will work with School of Social Work Prof. Karen Tabb Dina, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, Promise Healthcare-Frances Nelson, and Carle Hospital to understand the effects of a broad range of early environmental influences on child health and development and find ways to enhance it.

[Project details](#)



### Flocking Bicycles: Autonomous Two-Wheeled Urban Mobility

The Community-Academic Scholar will work with Graphic Design & Design for Responsible Innovation Prof. Juan Salamanca and Champaign County Bikes to explore the potential for a micromobility system using smart autonomous bicycles to serve as a viable option for commuting, contributing to significant environmental and social impacts, including meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets by replacing car rides or addressing barriers to accessing quality food and education in underserved communities.

[Project details](#)







# CAS SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS AND SCHOLARS





# Program Orientation and Kick-off

Marks the official start of the 10-week summer program

Will begin May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Session for scholars and academic and community mentors at which the CAS team will review program details and expectations







# Professional Development for Scholars

Weekly program sessions provide an opportunity for scholars to check in with the CAS team and ask project-specific questions

Featured topics include research, communication, career development, and community engagement

Led by CAS team members and invited guests with relevant expertise



# Closing the Research Loop

Scholars have the opportunity to explore science communication as they showcase the impact of their projects

IHSI's communications team will provide support and showcase scholars and projects





# Final Celebration



2025 Community-Academic Scholars

## CELEBRATION

Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> | 10:30am-12:00pm

Hosted by the Martens Center





# Support Beyond the Summer



**CAS team members can offer continuing support for project teams, including:**

- Proposal development support
- Workshop offerings
- Additional connections to faculty and community collaborators





# PROJECT SUBMISSION PROCESS



# Step 1: Review program information

## Now accepting project submissions for Summer 2025

We are seeking faculty and researchers who conduct community-engaged research in partnership with a community organization that address issues related to health, poverty or social inequity in the local community. Submit your project proposal by **Sunday, January 12, 2025**.

[Apply now](#)

### Eligible projects

- Involve an established collaboration with a community organization. Community organizations must be non-profits or NGOs, and may include health agencies, summer programs for children, schools, organizations serving special populations, etc. Priority is given to projects that allow a scholar to have direct contact with the community the project serves.
- Involve equitable partnership between the researcher and community stakeholder that is grounded in mutual respect, shared authority between university and community partners, and co-creation of goals and outcomes.
- Address an existing need within the community related to health, poverty, or social inequality.
- Investigate a specific research question (projects that include only a service component without accompanying research are not eligible).
- Guarantee a position for a summer undergraduate research assistant.

Preference will be given to projects that allow undergraduate scholars to directly interact (in-person or virtually) with individuals served by the community partner.

[View the 2021 projects](#)[View the 2022 projects](#)[View the 2023 projects](#)[View the 2024 projects](#)



# Step 2: Complete application and submit!



Applications should, ideally, be completed in collaboration with the community partner on the project

Deadline:  
January 12, 2025

## Key Application Elements

- ☒ Project title and abstract
- ☒ Description of scholar's role in the project
- ☒ Plan to support the scholar during the summer
- ☒ Role of community partner in the project



# Key Review Criteria

## **Community impact**

Does this project benefit the community with whom it is being conducted?

## **Geographic proximity to Champaign-Urbana**

Is this project based locally?

## **Strength of community-academic partnership**

Does this project represent a reciprocal collaboration between academic and community partners?

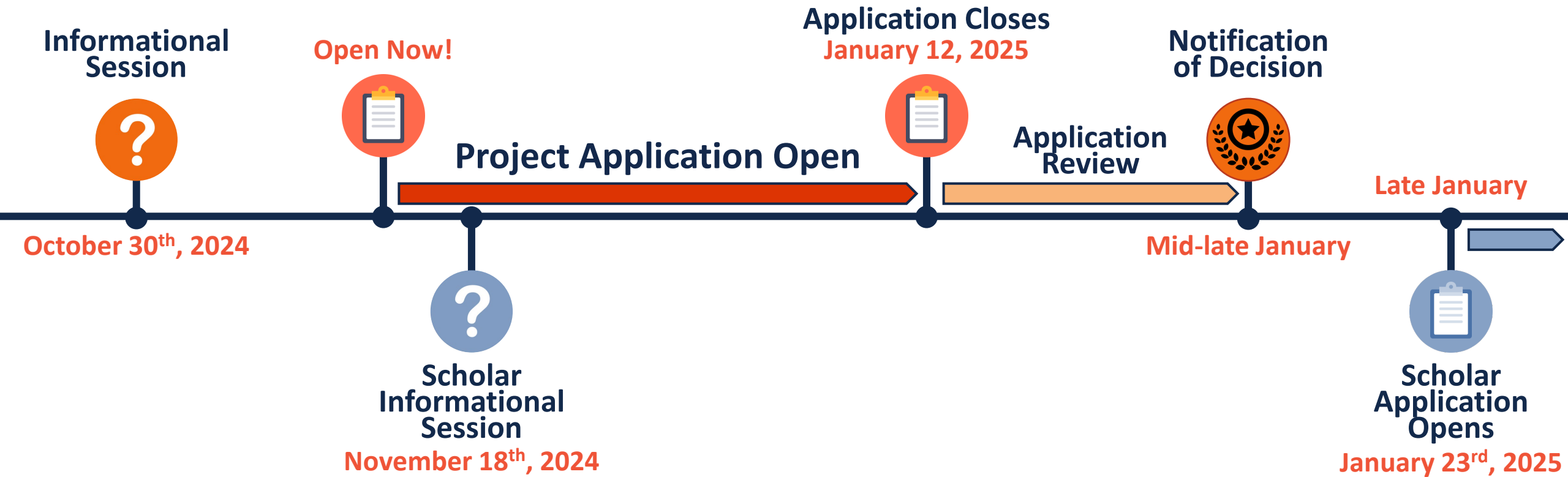
## **Nature and scope of student research experience**

Will the student engage with the community? Is the scope of work realistic for a 10-week experience?





# Application Timeline





# Selected Projects: Next Steps

Selected projects will be assigned a CAS team point of contact, who will follow up to gather any additional information needed to match a scholar to the project

The CAS team will stay in touch throughout the scholar application, acceptance, and onboarding process

IRB, ethics training, and other scholar onboarding must be completed prior to the start of the summer program







# MATCHING PROJECTS WITH SCHOLARS



# Scholar Application



Scholars will rank their top choice projects and provide written justifications for their selections

## Key Application Elements

- ☒ Demographic Information
- ☒ Interest in the program
- ☒ Background and experience
- ☒ Project ranking and justification

# Scholar Eligibility



Applicants should be current U of I students who are not graduating in Spring 2025



Academic mentors whose projects are accepted may recommend a scholar if they have an eligible student in mind



Mentors may sponsor a second scholar to work on their project using their own funds



Scholars are expected to be committed to their project for the entirety of the 10-week program







# ACADEMIC MENTOR PERSPECTIVE

# Academic Mentors: Dr. Raj & Dr. McKenna

Elenna Claudio-Deutsch



Dr. Mina Raj



Sophie Chiewtrakoon



Dr. Meaghan McKenna



Community-  
Engaged  
Research  
Project

SPICE-Healthcare: Awareness,  
Use, and Acceptance of Culturally  
Diverse Seasonings Among  
Healthcare Professionals

ClarkLindsey

Clark Lindsey Village

Community-  
Engaged  
Research  
Project

Implementing and evaluating writing  
interventions for K-2 students

 **Danville**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Students • Staff • Families • Community

Danville Public Schools

**Community Mentor**



**Academic Mentor**



**Community-  
Academic  
Scholar**



**Preparing students to address  
pressing societal issues**



A blue-tinted photograph of a street scene. A road with a white center line leads into the distance. On the left is a large tree and a brick building. On the right is a large brick building with arched windows and a tall chimney. A street sign with a stop sign and a pedestrian crossing symbol is visible on the right. The sky is overcast.

# QUESTIONS?