

Clare Boothe Luce scholarships provide financial aid for women studying chemistry, computer science or physics

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The Clare Boothe Luce program of the Henry Luce Foundation has given Xavier \$240,000 for four scholarships for women in chemistry, computer science or physics over a three-year period. Each student will receive full tuition and fees for two years.

In addition, Xavier will provide up to \$1,000 for each recipient to present research at a professional conference and assign a faculty mentor. Selection is based on academic excellence and an interest in pursuing graduate education and careers in science and engineering, fields in which women are underrepresented.

With the grant funding, four students will be awarded the scholarship, two in 2012 and two in 2013, for their junior and senior years. Xavier will contribute tuition and fees for two additional scholarships, one for both 2012 and 2013, in order to expand the impact of the program.

The percentage of Xavier women graduates in chemistry continues to exceed national rates, while for computer science and physics, Xavier tracks national rates. Xavier exceeds national rates for women attending graduate school in chemistry and physics.

“The funding offers us a tremendous opportunity to support the success of female students pursuing degrees and careers in chemistry, computer science and physics,” says University President Michael J. Graham, S.J. “Xavier’s emphasis on undergraduate research, particularly in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), provides a strong foundation for ongoing study in the sciences.”

Xavier’s program encourages more of its female science graduates to go to graduate school and pursue careers in science by enabling women to participate in undergraduate research. The science departments also ensure that first-year female science majors learn about research from upperclass women. And they support a program that invites alumni to discuss non-medical science career paths. Of the 12 Xavier women who received full Clare Boothe Luce scholarships under prior grants, nine have pursued graduate education in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, and two of these have completed PhDs and are now at post-doctoral positions, one at Harvard University and one at Vanderbilt University.

Since its first grants in 1989, the Clare Boothe Luce Program has become the single most significant source of private support for women in science, mathematics and engineering. Clare Boothe Luce, the widow of Henry R. Luce, was a playwright, journalist, U.S. Ambassador to Italy, and the first woman elected to Congress from Connecticut. In her bequest establishing this program, she sought “to encourage women to enter, study, graduate and teach” in science, mathematics and engineering.