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The Graduate Division will match donor gifts to SMART dollar for dollar through June 30, 2015. Each team’s $10,000 sponsorship provides $5,000 to graduate mentors, $3,500 to mentees, and $1,500 in research expenses.
Berkeley’s thriving graduate community is core to our top ranked programs spanning political science and economics, engineering and technology, music and the arts, law, and business. The breadth and depth of Berkeley’s research and the incomparable nature of our campus as a nexus for the exchange of ideas are why the National Research Council ranked 43 of Berkeley’s graduate programs in the top five nationwide. Berkeley has the largest number of highly ranked graduate programs in the country.

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Invest in Berkeley’s connections between people and ideas — connections that drive discovery.

Student Mentoring And Research Teams (SMART)

Lindsey Dougherty and Alex Niebergall. Their breakthrough research on how and why Clione ales, better known as the “Disco Clam,” emits its signature flashes of light received global news coverage, including The New York Times.

SMART provides crucial summer funding for graduate mentors and undergraduate mentees to undertake original research at Berkeley.

Lindsey, a Ph.D. student in Integrative Biology, selected Alex, a third-year undergraduate student in Marine Science, to advance the research she had pioneered. Lindsey found the clam’s inner lip has light-reflecting silica components, and the outer lip absorbs light. The opening and closing of the clam’s lip causes the “disco flashing.”

This SMART team is investigating whether increased flashing around predators serves to ward off threats, is a spawning signal, or is a lure to attract the plankton on which clams feed. Their research contributes to understanding structural coloration and biophotonics, processes with promising industrial and biotechnical implications.

Nobel Laureate and UC Berkeley faculty member Randy Schekman has participated in the SMART Program as a faculty advisor. He credits SMART with nurturing academic growth among undergraduate and graduate students, enhancing research on the Berkeley campus.

Visit smart.berkeley.edu to learn more.

Fellowship recipient Elsa Massoc, Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Politics

Elsa’s research connects her to faculty and peers in economics, sociology, and geography. She wants to understand how changes in the financial industry impact corporations and people in their everyday lives. Her hope is to reduce economic stratification, improve social mobility, and advance opportunity.

“If it weren’t for my fellowship funding I would never have found the intellectual community I’ve discovered at Berkeley, one that helps me envision change that I can play a part in.”

Why support graduate education at Berkeley?

“Berkeley is the most important institution of higher education in this country. Most of the funds that we now use to recruit the best young scholars come from private support. Last year when I won the Nobel Prize, I decided to donate the prize money in support of graduate education and to establish an endowed chair. I invite you to join me as a supporter of graduate education at UC Berkeley.”

Why support graduate education at Berkeley?

“Research is pursued to understand and improve the world.”

Why support graduate education at Berkeley?

“...it is essential that people contribute to sustain Berkeley.”

Why support graduate education at Berkeley?

“We are a university of ideas — and action.”

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