HWI Graduate Student Receives Coveted NIH Fellowship

The National Institute of General Medical Sciences has announced that Hauptman-Woodward’s Kevin Maharaj has been granted the National Institute of Health’s Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Predoctoral Fellowship.

A prestigious award, the fellowship will fund Maharaj’s graduate education for the next several years. He currently is a graduate student in the Structural Biology Department housed at the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute which is part of the University at Buffalo’s School of Medicine. Maharaj is studying under the tutelage of Dr. Daniel T. Gewirth, HWI senior research scientist and associate professor at UB. This is the first NIH fellowship awarded to a student at HWI.

“I am very appreciative to be a recipient of an NIH NRSA pre-doctoral fellowship. I know that this is a huge honor and I plan to work even harder because of this opportunity,” Maharaj said.

NIH awarded 673 pre-doctoral fellowships throughout the United States last year. Only eight of these National Institute of General Medical Sciences fellowships were awarded in New York State this year to students at Cornell (2), to Rochester (2), and 1 each at NYU, Yeshiva, Columbia, and UB-HWI. 53 overall NIH awards were granted in New York State.

“I’m grateful to the NIH for this award and excited that they have chosen to support the graduate training of Kevin Maharaj who is a talented student. I fully expect Kevin to make exciting new discoveries over the course of his graduate research career,” Dr. Michael Cain, Dean of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, said. “Equally important, however, the fellowship recognizes that the health and progress of our society is closely tied to our continuing and deep support of basic scientific research. This small investment in Kevin's training today will undoubtedly be repaid many times over in the decades to come.”

“An NIH NRSA was the first step in my research career, and I'm sure Kevin will look back later on and have similar thoughts about the importance of this program supporting young investigators,” David L. Dunn, M.D., Ph.D., vice president for Health Sciences, professor of Surgery, Microbiology and Immunology at UB, said.

These fellowships are named in honor of Ruth L. Kirschstein, M.D., who was the first woman director of an NIH institute, when she served as director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences from 1974 to 1993. She then held a number of leadership positions within the NIH. Throughout her career, Kirschstein worked as an administrator, fundraiser, and scientific researcher, and played a key role in public health responses to crisis such as when in the 1950s, she led the search for a safer polio vaccine advocating the Sabin oral vaccine that is now used worldwide and in the 1980s, when she was a leader in the public health response to the emerging AIDS epidemic, organizing, funding and mobilizing an NIH research team.

ABOUT HWI
With more than 50 years of exceptional scientific research, the Hauptman-Woodward Institute is an internationally-renowned independent, non-profit facility specializing in life-altering research. Our team of more than 75 members is committed to improving human health through the study of the causes of diseases, as well as potential therapies, at their fundamental molecular level. HWI is located in the heart of the Buffalo
Niagara Medical Campus in Downtown Buffalo, New York, in a state-of-the-art structural biology research center at 700 Ellicott Street. For more information, visit HWI’s website at www.hwi.buffalo.edu or call 716-898-8600.

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