

Damon Runyon Launches Post-Baccalaureate Research Internship

The one-year intensive cancer research internship program is for students who come from backgrounds underrepresented in the sciences.

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The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation is thrilled to announce the launch of the Damon Runyon Scholars Program for Advancing Research and Knowledge (SPARK), a one-year intensive cancer research internship program for post-baccalaureate students who come from backgrounds underrepresented in the sciences. The goal of the program is to provide students who have the potential to become leaders in cancer research with rigorous scientific training and a network of mentors and peers to support their next steps into graduate school and beyond.

Damon Runyon has been funding extraordinary cancer researchers for over 75 years. Our existing core Award Programs support the nation's most promising young scientists at critical stages in their research careers—as postdoctoral fellows, as newly independent investigators, and as physicians making the leap to become physician-scientists. These talented scientists are conducting high-risk, high-reward research now, and they are positioned to lead the field for decades to come.

But it is equally important to ensure that we are not losing cancer researchers before they step foot in a lab. The best and brightest college graduates should be encouraged to pursue rigorous scientific educations and commit their talents to taking on cancer. Damon Runyon's scientific advisors and Board of Directors recognize that talented young people are all across the nation, and those with the passion, curiosity, and determination to pursue a career in cancer research should have the opportunity to do so. Accordingly, SPARK will leverage Damon Runyon's existing infrastructure to support students at an even earlier stage in the research pipeline and eliminate barriers to a career in academic research.

SPARK Scholars will be matched with a current or former Damon Runyon scientist at seven partnering institutions across the country, where they will learn to conduct research. Each Scholar will receive a stipend of up to \$50,000, along with a living allowance and a travel stipend. Throughout the year, Scholars will gather for unique programming to foster community among the cohort and strengthen the skills needed to be successful in a research career. They will also have the opportunity to present a poster at the Annual Damon Runyon Fellows' Retreat alongside their mentors and other Damon Runyon scientists.

“SPARK is not only a program—it’s a commitment to ushering in the next generation of brilliant scientists from all over the country and every background,” says Damon Runyon Scientific Director Megan Allen, PhD. “As someone who personally benefited from a similar program before entering graduate school, I understand the profound impact that these initiatives have on individuals aspiring to make a difference. It’s my hope that this program will help emerging scholars gain the confidence to tackle the tough research questions that have mystified the cancer research field for decades.”

The three-year pilot program will begin in 2024 with five inaugural Scholars, to be selected by a distinguished committee of experts in the field. For more information or to apply now, please [click here](#).

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