



Posse Scientific Method Expands to New Programs

Irv Epstein garners another \$600,000 to help nurture minority science students, and he knows just how to spend it

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Irving Epstein, The Henry F. Fischbach Professor of Chemistry

Chemistry professor Irving Epstein has a proven formula for scientific success. Four years after winning a million-dollar grant to start a program aimed at attracting and keeping talented, underrepresented students in college-level science, Epstein won another \$600,000 grant to enhance his scientific method.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) made Epstein “a million-dollar professor” in 2006 to fund the creation of the Science Posse program at Brandeis in collaboration with the New York-based Posse Foundation, started by Deborah Bial '87. The second HHMI grant will help him broaden the Science Posse program, the only one of its kind in the nation.

The program recruits, trains and mentors “posses” of 10 inner-city students each year to prepare them for studying science at Brandeis. With stats for two Posse groups in hand, Epstein’s approach — which includes precollege training and a two-week “boot camp” — is yielding results. Of the 20 returning students in Science Posse, all are planning to major in a science-related field.

Epstein and his Science Posse colleagues are also launching several new programs, including a science-oriented version of Let’s Get Ready, a Boston-based program that has expanded college access for low-income students by utilizing undergraduates as tutors and mentors. Another initiative will adapt a regional version of the high school United States Biology Olympiad, targeting Boston and Waltham-area seventh and eighth graders.