

For Immediate Release

Contact: **Courtney McCall**
(314) 340-3391
mccallc@hssu.edu

Harris-Stowe Graduates, Students and Faculty Taking Charge in STEM

ST. LOUIS, MO (June 3, 2014) – Harris-Stowe State University College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) graduates, students and faculty are answering the call this summer to meet the needs of the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) job market through internships, graduate education and dedication to the mission of their fields.

The launch of growing STEM activity at Harris-Stowe was made possible some six years ago with the awarding of \$2.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Recently, the university learned that the grant would be extended for an additional year in the amount of \$175,000. Not only does the grant fund the Institute for Science and Mathematics summer program for incoming freshmen, but it has also opened doors for several students to participate in undergraduate research component.

With intent of only initially serving 16 students, the grant has provided amazing research opportunities for nearly 70 students interested in enhancing their skills in STEM areas. The summer 2014 program, which recently launched, has a total of four student participants who are conducting research in the areas of biology and math education.

The addition of degree programs in biology and mathematics—which was also made possible by the NSF grant—has made HSSU a major player in the STEM arena.

The biology degree program at HSSU continues to be a beacon for several students, and Erica Ross is no exception. A stellar student at Harris-Stowe, Ross received a \$5,000 summer internship at Michigan State University, East Lansing, to participate in undergraduate research in psychology. Ross is currently completing undergraduate research under HSSU professor of biology Jana Marcette, and has a strong interest in pursuing a career in psychiatry.

Out of a pool of 90 students, 10 of which were chosen, biology majors Chelsea Pretz and Joseph Bradley were both selected to participate in this summer's NSF-sponsored Research Experiences for Undergraduates at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Pretz will carry out research under Danelle Haake, a restoration ecologist at the 34-acre Litzsinger Road Ecology Center run by the Botanical Garden. Bradley's research will focus on pollen.

Additionally, HSSU students who participate in undergraduate research acquire technical skills and critical thinking skills that prepare them for life after graduation. As such, Harris-Stowe's CAS is collaborating again this summer with Saint Louis University (SLU) to provide a joint summer lab experience for four biology majors who will participate in a summer internship program at SLU's School of Medicine, Department of Pharmacological and Physiological

Sciences. The six-week paid internships will require each student to work in a different medical research lab at the School of Medicine.

“Many of the students in the CAS are making history, and we are delighted and proud of their accomplishments,” said Dr. Lateef Adelani, dean of the CAS.

Diamond Kelly, a 2014 graduate of the biology program has been accepted to graduate school at Alabama State University to continue her education in forensic science.

“I entered the biology program at Harris-Stowe because I originally wanted a career in the medical field. However, through my studies and experiences I grew interested in forensic science,” said Kelly. “My instructors opened a whole new world to me and encouraged me to continue my educational goals in this field. Their support reassured me I was on the right track when I chose to continue my education after completing my biology degree.”

Opportunities such as these will continue to elevate and expose HSSU students as they seek resources to help them excel in their professional careers.

In 2013, HSSU ranked No. 1 in the state in degree production of African-Americans in mathematics (Missouri Department of Higher Education). Adding to that honor, faculty of the Harris-Stowe mathematics program hosted its annual Kappa Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society induction ceremony earlier this spring, ushering in five new student members.

With so many recent advancements in STEM taking place at Harris-Stowe, it seemed appropriate for Dr. Tommie Turner, director of the Institute for Science and Mathematics to emphasize the importance of STEM degrees at HSSU in her latest publication “How our historically black university (#HBCU) expanded to offer STEM degrees,” in the May 7th edition of *Elsevier Connect*. The article, which gained national awareness, shed light on the growing demand and opportunities in STEM fields and the vital role HSSU is taking to prepare a diverse body of STEM talent.

“STEM degrees provide numerous pathways for exciting new discoveries,” said Dr. Turner. Students who focus their studies in a STEM major have a wealth of opportunities to conduct innovative research and pursue future careers.”

Harris-Stowe State University, located in midtown St. Louis, is a fully accredited four-year institution that offers 14 degree programs in the areas of teacher education, business and arts & sciences. In 2013, HSSU ranked No. 1 in the state in degree production of African-Americans in mathematics (Missouri Department of Higher Education). The university, which has been in existence for more than 150 years, offers the most affordable bachelor’s degree in the state of Missouri.

###