

Harris Manchester College, Oxford, UK

VCU Partnership Director (s) and Primary contact(s) at partner institution

- Jeff Wing, National Scholarship Coordinator, VCU Honors College
- Ralph Waller and Judith Nesbitt, Harris Manchester

Partnership summary description (areas of focus, commencement of partnership, etc.)

- The formal partnership agreement between VCU and Harris Manchester College was signed in September 2007.
- Areas of focus include participation of VCU faculty in the Harris Manchester Summer Research Institute, research collaborations such as the genetics of depression study done in collaboration among VCU, Harris Manchester, and another partner university, Fudan University, and enhanced student experiences, including sending VCU students to study at Harris Manchester.

Highlights of significant outcomes for 2008-09

- \$2.8 million ongoing grant to study genetic risk factors for depression.
- One VCU student studying at Harris Manchester College on scholarship.
- VCU faculty participation in the Harris Manchester Summer Research Institute.

Research subject area collaborations:

- Identification of genetic variants that impact on the risk for recurrent major depression

External funding received including pending proposals

- Virginia Commonwealth University is part of an ongoing, international research team that received a Wellcome Trust grant totaling more than \$2.8 million to identify the genetic variants that have an impact on the risk for recurrent major depression. The goal of the five-year project, a collaboration between researchers based at the University of Oxford in England, VCU in the United States, and Fudan University in Shanghai, China, is to identify genetic variants that affect the risk for recurrent major depression.

Student Exchange Programs

- VCU honors student Fatima Syed spent the 2008-09 academic year at Harris Manchester earning a master's degree in Comparative Social Policy in Balliol College, Oxford.

Challenges for future development of the partnership

- Funding. VCU student attendance at Harris Manchester costs approximately \$40,000. Very few VCU students have access to the funds necessary to cover this expense. Accordingly, partnership funds have been used to provide scholarships that cover the cost of attending Harris Manchester. If student participation is to continue, an ongoing source of funds for this activity must be identified.

List of VCU faculty and administrators (with academic area/home) who traveled to the partner university

- Dr. Kristin Swenson (School of World Studies), and Dr. Lisa Abrams (School of Education) travelled to Harris Manchester in the summer of 2009 to participate in Oxford's Harris Manchester College Summer Research Institute.