The Basic Sciences of the School of Medicine are pleased to announce the annual Lou De Felice Summer Student Travel Awards. The purpose of these awards is to promote diversity and inclusion in the biomedical research community. Specifically, these awards will provide funding for faculty mentors from either VU or VUMC and their Vanderbilt Summer Science Academy (VSSA) undergraduate student to attend either the SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science) or ABRCMS (Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students) research conference this upcoming fall.

The specific goals of the travel awards are to:

• Provide career development and continued mentoring for VSSA students that contribute to diversity in the biomedical research community
• Offer their faculty mentors a chance to continue mentoring the VSSA student and to contribute to diversity and inclusion by participating in ABRCMS or SACNAS.
• Engage VU or VUMC faculty in the major recruiting opportunities for Vanderbilt programs that ABRCMS and SACNAS provide with over 1000 diverse trainees in attendance.

Three (3) $5000 awards are available to:

• Pay for the costs of both the VSSA student and his or her mentor to attend either ABRCMS or SACNAS meetings (their choice).
• Contribute $500 to the mentor’s lab to use at his or her discretion.

Dates/locations of 2017 meetings:

• SACNAS: Salt Lake City UT, October 19-21, 2017
• ABRCMS: Phoenix AZ, November 1-4, 2017

Eligibility and application:

• VSSA students (including independent members) will be invited to apply with applications due by Friday, June 23rd. The application can be found at https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/vssa/lou-de-felice-summer-student-travel-award and will be reviewed by a 3-member faculty committee plus the Director of the VSSA. Faculty mentors of the top applicants will be contacted to determine their commitment to attend the selected meeting prior to finalizing the 3 award winners.

The Travel Awards are named in honor of the late Lou DeFelice, a former Professor of Pharmacology and Neuroscience at Vanderbilt from 1995-2008 who was an early and devoted advocate for improving diversity among trainees in the biomedical sciences. Lou served as Director of the Pharmacology Training Program and the Minority Bridges Program; he was also Asst. Dean for Diversity in Medical Education from 2002-2004.
The De Felice Travel Awards are sponsored by the Office of the Dean of Basic Sciences of the School of Medicine and the Vanderbilt Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. They are based on a concept first suggested by Joey Barnett, Professor of Pharmacology and colleague of Dr. DeFelice.