



**iSchool Inclusion Institute
of Information Sciences**

IMAGINE. IMMERSE. INSPIRE.

The iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) is an undergraduate research and leadership development program that prepares students from underrepresented populations for graduate study and careers in the information sciences. Each year 20 undergraduate students from across the country are selected to become i3 Scholars. Those students undertake a year-long experience that includes two summer institutes held at the University of Pittsburgh and a year-long team research project. Although an intensive and challenging program, i3 prepares students for the rigor of graduate study and research in the information sciences. The U.S.-based iSchools value the preparation

provided by i3 and actively recruit i3 Scholars to their graduate programs.

Introductory Institute (June, Year 1, Four Weeks)

The Introductory Institute spans four weeks and is held at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences (iSchool). During those four weeks, i3 Scholars are immersed in special-topics workshops designed to highlight the various fields and research areas in the information sciences. Past workshops have included discussions on human factors and robotics, information access and equality, new media and journalism, gaming, human computer interaction, security and cryptography, and many others. i3 Scholars are offered professional development seminars led by experts in academia and industry, which focus on mentoring, resume writing, graduate school applications, and networking. Also during the Introductory Institute, i3 Scholars select into their research teams and work to identify a topic of research for their year-long project. At the end of the four weeks, each research team must develop and present a research proposal detailing their topic and intended methods.

i3 is not all work though. The Introductory Institute includes annual outings to Kennywood Amusement Park, a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game, kayaking on the Allegheny River, and the Carnegie Museums, among others. Tickets/fees for these trips are covered by the program and are free to i3 Scholars.

Team Research Project

After the Introductory Institute, i3 Scholars work in their teams on a year-long research project. Each team receives support and advising from a faculty mentor and the i3 Director. Teams utilize distance technology and social media to collaborate throughout the year. The project includes a comprehensive research paper and creative deliverable. Deadlines are set throughout the year for each section of the paper to provide structure and a suggested timeline. The creative deliverable portion of the project requires teams to incorporate some creative element into their research project. Examples of a creative deliverable include: mobile apps, blogs, videos, games, data visualizations, business plans, multimedia displays, or any other idea proposed by the team.

Research projects from the 2011 and 2012 cohort included topics such as the Occupy Wall St. movement and community informatics, pipeline development for minority students into STEM fields, viral videos and sharing through social media, and gender roles and sexualization in gaming. For a complete list of research projects, check out the ***i3 Cohorts*** pages.

Concluding Institute (June, Year 2, Two Weeks)

To complete their experience, i3 Scholars return to the University of Pittsburgh for the two-week Concluding Institute. Because the Concluding Institute overlaps with the Introductory Institute in June of each year, i3 Scholars have a unique opportunity to expand their professional network. Returning i3 Scholars offer their guidance to the new students and take part in cross-cohort projects and design challenges. Returning i3 Scholars also receive additional mentoring from iSchool professionals when creating their future academic and career plans.

Teams spend most of the Concluding Institute revising their research and designing a formal poster and presentation. At the end of the Concluding Institute, each team presents their work and fields questions from iSchool faculty and staff. Upon a positive review from the i3 Director and faculty, each team officially graduates from the program and is recognized at a farewell ceremony. The team research project and Concluding Institute are excellent opportunities to gain valuable research experience at the undergraduate level. Once their projects are completed, teams have the option of submitting their work to the annual iConference.

Admissions Criteria

The i3 admissions process is competitive; however, we are looking for qualities beyond GPA. We seek students who have shown academic promise, including those who have demonstrated marked improvement over their college careers.

Who Should Apply?

- Undergraduate students enrolled in an accredited college or university in the US
- Students enrolled in any academic major; undeclared or undecided students are also welcome to apply
- Individuals that can demonstrate a commitment to increasing opportunities for underrepresented minorities
- U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents
- Students who can appreciate the potential opportunities available in the information sciences

Application Requirements

- Application, including three essay questions
- Two letters of recommendation
- Official undergraduate transcripts

Submitting Your Application

The application is available online [here](#).

Instructions for Letters of Recommendations are available [here](#) (downloadable). Please download and send this file to those who have agreed to submit letters on your behalf. Completed letters and your official undergraduate transcripts should be sent to:

i3info@pitt.edu

iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3)
University of Pittsburgh
School of Information Sciences
135 N. Bellefield Avenue, Room 603
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Helpful Hints for Applying

- Proofread your application!
- Submit your application early.
- Ask people for letters of recommendation who can highlight your skills and accomplishments. Letters of recommendation should not come from friends or family.

i3 Governance & Funding

In 2009, faculty and staff from the iSchools at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania State University, and Drexel University collaborated to design and develop the iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) in order to address the lack of diversity among students and faculty in the information sciences. The i3 initiative is based on the premise that a diverse faculty will draw students from underrepresented groups into the information professions.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported i3 with two generous grants: a one-year planning grant of \$100,000.00, awarded in 2009, and a three-year implementation grant of \$600,000.00, awarded in 2010. Additional support has come from the the iSchools Caucus (www.ischools.org), a consortium of information schools dedicated to advancing the information sciences as a broad, interdisciplinary field. The iSchools actively recruit i3 Scholars for graduate study as well as provide faculty and staff to serve as guest speakers and lecturers during the summer institutes.

Governing Structure

i3 is managed by Principal Investigators, Dean Ronald L. Larsen and Assistant Professor James "Kip" Carrier, of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences. Dean Larsen and Dr. Carrier are supported by the i3 Advisory Board and Working Committees -- Recruitment, Curriculum, and Evaluation. Members of the Advisory Board and Working Committees bring years of professional

experience in academia and the private sector to the i3 program and represent over twenty five institutions across the country.

Goals & The Case for Diversity

To meet the growing economic demand for graduates in science and technology fields, the i3 initiative intends to accomplish the following goals:

- Increase the number of highly-skilled graduate students and faculty in the information sciences and retain those individuals in U.S. colleges and universities
- Provide role models for students and faculty from underrepresented groups
- Better represent and serve the various diverse communities across the country
- Promote innovation and creativity across the information sciences and related disciplines

i3 is part of a larger, national effort to reinvest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The goals of i3 are closely tied to this national effort. Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, explained that connection in a 2011 editorial in *Science*: