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## **Darien Professor at Purchase College Heads up Program to get Under-represented Groups in Biomedical Sciences**

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Dr. Karen Singer-Freeman of Darien is one of two professors at Purchase College heading up a campus program that aims to improve the participation of underrepresented groups in biomedical sciences.

Under the direction of Singer-Freeman and Dr. Linda Bastone, the MARC U-STAR program is set up to develop the academic, social, and economic capital of underrepresented STEM students interested in pursuing careers in the biomedical sciences.

The [nationwide program](#)'s name comes from "Maximizing Access to Research Careers" and "Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research." According to a National Institute of Health [Web page](#), "[U]nderrepresented students are individuals belonging to particular groups that have been determined by the grantee institution to be underrepresented in biomedical research."

The honors program is meant to prepare students for success by providing research opportunities, scholarships, and professional development. The program aims to improve STEM education for all students by providing faculty with training in culturally sensitive pedagogy and supporting curriculum development.

“The program will maximize student-faculty interaction, minimize the presentation of science as impersonal and competitive, and provide the rigor necessary to prepare students for graduate study,” said Singer-Freeman, an associate professor of psychology.

Dr. Alison Gammie, director of the NIGMS Division of Training, Workforce Development, and Diversity. “This undergraduate program promotes increased research training and mentoring opportunities, supports students in their pursuit of Ph.D.s and helps build the next generation of biomedical science leaders.”

The program is a new initiative made possible by a five-year grant of more than \$1.3 million from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), part of the National Institutes of Health. Purchase College is one of 54 universities across the country that currently have the program.

Purchase College President Thomas J. Schwarz said, “In addition to helping students gain admission to and thrive in STEM doctoral programs, the grant will provide faculty members with pedagogical training, thereby improving STEM education at Purchase for years to come.”