The Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research

Ben-Gurion University (BGU) of the Negev is currently the fastest growing research university in Israel with ~ 20,000 students and 1900 faculty members from different scientific fields. At a separate campus of BGU in Sede Boqer, researchers at the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research (BIDR) are leading in a variety of disciplines that relate to energy, food and water nexus of arid regions. Specifically, scientists at BIDR carry state-of-the-art research that includes dryland agriculture, desert ecology, hydrology, water treatment and desalination as well as solar energy and environmental physics. BIDR is an international campus and, as such, the official language used throughout is English, providing a welcoming educational environment to foreign students.

Program objectives

- Provide unique educational training in environmental research for excellent undergrad students in the fields of natural sciences and engineering.
- Broaden the cultural scope of bright young scholars by an international experience in Israel.

Implementation

The program is offered to undergraduate (final year) students in the fields of life-sciences, exact-sciences and engineering. Research projects will be in the fields of:

- Desert agriculture- Soil-Plant-Atmosphere Continuum (SPAC),
- Aquaculture,
- Microalgal biotechnology,
- Desalination and water treatment,
- Hydrology,
- Environmental microbiology,
- Solar energy,
- Environmental physics,
- Ecology,
- Evolutionary biology,
- Conservation,
- Wildlife management.
The program will extend for six-weeks, at which students will live in shared housing at BIDR and experience state-of-the-art multidisciplinary research as interns in the institutes' research labs. The scientific climax of the program will be a joint symposium, at which students will present their results and conclusions to their fellows and supervisors. Concurrently, the students will be exposed to various social and cultural activities unique to the Negev desert area. The program will also include educational tours of Israel's gems, including: Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Masada, the Dead Sea and the Machtesh Ramon (crater).

Travel costs and board are expected to be covered by the foreign students, while BIDR (BGU) will cover the housing fees, research and educational expenses related to the program. The students will also be able to obtain academic credits as an internship or research project according to the home university's consent.

Participating students will experience new, brief, yet intense view of graduate studies in Israel, and specifically at the BIDR campus of Ben-Gurion University. In addition, this program aspires to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to gain academic research experience and engage in scientific academic life, including attending weekly seminars and utilizing top-notch scientific equipment and facilities, under direct supervision of BIDR researchers.

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