

News Release

U of M Crookston Accepted into Small World Initiative involved in Quest for New Antibiotics

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Monday, March 21, 2016

The University of Minnesota Crookston has been accepted into the Small World Initiative (SWI). Antibiotic resistance and the resulting diminishing supply of effective antibiotics are two of the biggest threats to global health today.

Through the search for new antibiotics in the microbiology teaching lab, the Crookston campus will join a larger effort to work on the development of new antibiotics. Over the past three years, the crowdsourcing antibiotic discovery effort of SWI has grown rapidly to include 109 participating schools across 32 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and nine countries.

The Crookston campus will be the first in the University of Minnesota system to be part of the initiative.

Background

While pharmaceutical companies have shifted away from developing new antibiotics, existing antibiotics are losing efficacy due to widespread antibiotic resistance. Formulated at Yale University in 2012 by Jo Handelsman, the Small World Initiative™ (SWI) is addressing this worldwide health threat through innovative and inspiring science curriculum. SWI centers around an introductory biology course in which students perform hands-on field and laboratory research on soil samples in the hunt for new antibiotics. This is particularly relevant as over two thirds of antibiotics come from soil bacteria or fungi. Learn more by visiting www.smallworldinitiative.org.

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 34 bachelor's degree programs, 22 minors, and 39 areas of emphasis on campus as well as 14 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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