Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

Director

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Website: https://belinblank.education.uiowa.edu

The Connie Belin and Jacqueline N. Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development is dedicated to serving the needs of advanced learners at local, national, and international levels. It offers programs for preservice and in-service educators, including the State of Iowa Talented and Gifted Endorsement. Our online and on-campus courses about the nature and needs of advanced learners and ways to facilitate talent development support the professional development of educators worldwide.

The center is home to the Assessment and Counseling Clinic and the Acceleration Institute.

Precollege Program Offerings

The Belin-Blank Center offers a wide variety of programs for precollege students.

High School Research Symposium

The High School Research Symposium (grades 9–12) engages students in original research and experimentation in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math). Students submit research papers in early January and present the results of their research to a panel of judges and an audience of their peers at the February symposium.

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

The Belin-Blank Center is proud to serve as the Iowa and Midwest region at-large affiliate for the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards (grades 7–12), which recognizes achievement in the literary and visual arts. The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards program is the nation’s longest-running, largest, and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens. Over the past 90 years, the awards have recognized and encouraged artists and writers such as Sylvia Plath, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, Tom Otterness, and Zac Posen, among countless others.

Weekend Enrichment Program

The Weekend Enrichment program (grades 3–8) consists of half-day enrichment opportunities for elementary and junior high students that take place on the University of Iowa campus. Classes in STEM, the arts, and the humanities cultivate students' interest and enliven their curiosity.

Summer Programs

The Belin-Blank Center also offers the following summer programs, many of which are residential programs held on the University of Iowa campus. Students in each program participate in cultural and recreational activities and have access to the university's libraries, computer facilities, and study areas. For residential programs, housing and meals are provided at the university's residence halls. Junior Scholars Academy students do not stay on campus.

Blank Summer Institute

The Blank Summer Institute for the Arts and Sciences (BSI) is a program that provides an intensive, advanced educational experience designed to enhance talented students' intellectual and social growth. The BSI plan of study complements the regular school curriculum. Students are nominated for program participation.

To be eligible for BSI, students must be Iowa residents, must be completing grade 7 or 8, and must be nominated by their schools. Students selected for BSI receive a scholarship to cover part of the institute's cost.

Junior Scholars Academy

The Junior Scholars Academy (JSA) is a summer program designed specifically for bright elementary and middle school students. In this weeklong, commuter program, students spend their days thoroughly exploring a topic while having fun with other kids who share their enthusiasm for learning.

Summer Writing Online

The Summer Writing Online offers a three-week online program for students completing grade 9, 10, or 11. Students learn from world-class faculty and graduates of the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop. The program is 100% synchronous, featuring 3.5 hours of interactive class time each day for students to create community with other talented, young writers as they read, write, laugh, and learn together.

Twice-Exceptional Summer Academy

The Twice-Exceptional Summer Academy is a two-day semi-residential experience that focuses on a variety of topics to help prepare students for success in college. There are activities for students and for parents and guardians. In addition to sessions, the camp includes team building and social activities. A parent or guardian must attend the entire camp.

University-Based Programs

Academy for Twice-Exceptionality

A college journey at the University of Iowa embraces meaningful academic experiences and the development of important skills, including independence, social-emotional maturity, effective communication, and career readiness. The Academy for Twice-Exceptionality partners with neurodiverse college students to foster and support these experiences and skills and enhance community engagement as an Iowa Hawkeye. The academy strives to ensure that neurodiverse students have a positive and fulfilling college experience, nurturing students' talents while also creating a sense of community and helping students connect with resources from the Belin-Blank Center, the University of Iowa, and the broader community.

Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy

The Bucksbaum Early Entrance Academy gives high-achieving early high school graduates the opportunity to enroll at the University of Iowa. The Bucksbaum Academy provides top students with a high-level curriculum while supporting them through the transition from high school to the University of Iowa. The academy focuses on building a community of advanced learners who are striving to become future leaders. We provide support through weekly seminars, merit

scholarships, individual weekly meetings, and a variety of social events. The program is open to students worldwide.