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Helena undergraduate student receives funding for research

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NEWS RELEASE

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June 9, 1999

Contact: Carol Brewer, UM assistant professor of biological sciences, (406) 243-6016.

HELENA UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECEIVES FUNDING FOR RESEARCH

MISSOULA –

A **Helena** undergraduate student in the Division of Biological Sciences at The University of Montana has received funding for her summer research project.

Senior Vanessa Groves earned funding through the Integrated Biological Science Courses Organized Around Research project (Project IBS-CORE), which is intended to involve more undergraduate students in biological research.

Groves, the daughter of Margaret Ferris, will receive a monthly stipend of \$750 for three months, plus a budget of up to \$1,000 for research materials and travel. A committee of biology faculty members reviewed and ranked all student research proposals when deciding which 10 students would be named 1999 IBS-CORE Undergraduate Research Fellows.

Groves' research project is titled "Survey of Microflora of Bees Using DNA-based Methods." She intends to study the electrostatically charged hair covering the bodies of bees. These hairs pick up particles of pollen that are subsequently carried to flowers, causing pollination. It is likely that the electrostatic charge on a bee's exterior also attracts a variety of

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microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses and fungal spores. Identifying the indigenous bacterial microflora that bees encounter can provide information as to whether they can be effective carriers and transporters of bacteria. Using this information, it may be possible in the future to detect and monitor the fate and transport of an indigenous or introduced bacterium in the environment.

Project IBS-CORE is funded by a prestigious \$1.4 million grant that was awarded to UM last year by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a nonprofit medical research organization.

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