

# Program Guide for EducationUSA Advisers and Students



# NEST SCHOLARS

*An International Women's Undergraduate  
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)  
Education and Enrichment Initiative*

**Information Packet for Matriculation in the Fall of 2013**



## Objective of the NeXXt Scholars Program

The objective of the NeXXt Scholars Program is to provide young women with opportunities for a quality undergraduate education in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at women's colleges.

## Background and NeXXt Scholars Program Overview

The NeXXt Scholars Program is part of an International Women's Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative, which was launched by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in December 2011 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/01/180291.htm>). By partnering with a consortium of U.S. women's colleges, the NeXXt Scholars Program is preparing the *next* generation of female global leaders, discovering the *next* great idea, and solving the *next* big challenge. The double X in the Program's title symbolizes the X chromosomes of women.

The NeXXt Scholars Program offers female students from countries with Muslim-majority populations and college-selected American young women interested in studying STEM disciplines the opportunity to pursue an undergraduate degree program at U.S. women's colleges. Students apply directly to any of the 38 U.S. women's colleges participating in the Women's College Consortium. Upon acceptance and matriculation, the international NeXXt scholar is matched to a school-selected American NeXXt scholar, typically a first-year, and the pair explores the program together. The inaugural class of NeXXt Scholars enrolled in the Fall of 2012 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/10/199153.htm>).

All NeXXt scholars receive access to the STEM community through their 5-year membership to the New York Academy of Sciences (the Academy, <http://www.nyas.org/WhatWeDo/ScienceEd/NeXXtScholars.aspx>). Scholars are also individually matched with a mentor, who is a successful female professional in a STEM-related field, in order to provide one-on-one support regarding career paths and professional development. Additionally, scholars gain access to leadership, internship, and research opportunities to build the skills and confidence needed to become the next leaders, problem-solvers, and innovators of communities in the U.S. and abroad.

## Advantages offered by the NeXXt Scholars Program

### Benefits of attending a U.S. women's college:

- Scholars are immersed in a welcoming academic environment that focuses uniquely on providing resources and support for female undergraduates.
- Women's colleges are encouraging incubators that inspire leadership and confidence in all students.
- The schools provide access to state-of-the-art facilities that offer undergraduates hands-on investigative research opportunities with faculty members in the STEM fields.
- During undergraduate training and thereafter, women's colleges offer a strong network of global women alumnae.
- Many colleges provide summer research or internship opportunities to undergraduates.

### **Benefits of participation in the Program:**

- Award of a 5-year sponsored membership to the New York Academy of Sciences—4 years during undergraduate studies and a year post-graduation.
- Based on shared interests, the Academy assigns each scholar to a professional STEM mentor (or Fellow) for career development and assistance with scientific networking.
- Each international NeXXt scholar is paired to an incoming American NeXXt scholar as nominated by the college.
- The Program offers opportunities for participation in skills development workshops as well as access to internships and research opportunities.
- Scholars are exposed to an incredible STEM education environment with high-tech equipment and hands-on learning at a participating women's college.
- Intermingling of the students ensures internationalization of U.S. women's college campuses while dispelling misperceptions and developing mutual understanding and respect across country borders.
- NeXXt scholars are able to network with other young STEM professionals and act as ambassadors for their country of origin.

### **Applying for the NeXXt Scholars Program**

#### **Eligibility:**

- The international students must be female citizens of focus countries with predominantly Muslim populations (see Table 1).
- Within those countries, women from any religious group or economic status are eligible to apply.
- The female applicants must be currently residing in a focus country and attending high school there (although out-of-country matriculation will be considered on a case-by-case basis if immediate family still resides in the focus country of origin).
- The students must plan to major in STEM fields.
- The program is intended for first-time undergraduate students interested in earning associate's or bachelor's degrees.

#### **Scholarships and financial aid:**

Although the NeXXt Scholars Program does not provide any scholarship or directly include a financial aid component, some of the women's colleges offer need-based and/or merit-based financial assistance to qualified students. Other schools are able to assist with tuition and living expenses. For details, refer to the women's college admissions guide at [www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm](http://www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm). To secure tuition assistance, candidates must apply to the women's colleges by the appropriate financial aid deadlines (which may be different from the application deadlines) and submit the necessary documents. Colleges will inform applicants directly of the financial aid package, if any, at the time of the acceptance decision.

Further, some countries provide scholarship funds for students interested in studying abroad. Details are specific to the nature of the opportunity. Contact the country’s EducationUSA adviser for more information (<http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php>).

**Table 1: Focus Regions**

|              |            |   |
|--------------|------------|---|
| Afghanistan  | Iraq       | Palestinian Territories<br>(West Bank and Gaza) |
| Albania      | Jordan     | Qatar   |
| Algeria      | Kosovo     | Saudi Arabia                                    |
| Azerbaijan   | Kuwait     | Senegal   |
| Bahrain      | Kyrgyzstan | Sierra Leone                                    |
| Bangladesh   | Lebanon    | Somalia   |
| Brunei       | Libya      | Sudan   |
| Burkina Faso | Malaysia   | Syria   |
| Chad         | Maldives   | Tajikistan                                      |
| Comoros      | Mali       | Tunisia   |
| Djibouti     | Mauritania | Turkey  |
| Egypt        | Morocco    | Turkmenistan                                    |
| Gambia       | Niger      | United Arab Emirates                            |
| Guinea       | Nigeria    | Uzbekistan                                      |
| Indonesia    | Oman       | Yemen   |
| Iran         | Pakistan   |   |

#### Overview of the application process:

- The international applicant, who is planning to major in a STEM field, needs to contact her EducationUSA adviser (<http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php>) for a nomination letter. The adviser must then submit the nomination letter directly to the colleges of interest and a copy should be emailed to [nextscholars@state.gov](mailto:nextscholars@state.gov).
- In addition to completing the nomination letter, the EducationUSA adviser must also designate the student as an applicant to the NeXXt Scholars Program by filling out an online application. For instructions, contact the administrators of the Program at [nextscholars@state.gov](mailto:nextscholars@state.gov).
- The student must apply directly to any of the 38 U.S. women’s colleges through standard procedures (see table 2). The requirements for each school are detailed in the application guide at [www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm](http://www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm). Questions can be directed to the EducationUSA adviser, the NeXXt Scholars Program via email, or points-of-contact listed in the women’s college guide. Applying to more than one institution is highly recommended.
- The applicant becomes designated as an international NeXXt scholar upon confirmed matriculation at the women’s college and is required to pursue a STEM major.
- There is no method for applying to become an American NeXXt scholar as this process is managed directly by each college in which an international NeXXt scholar has matriculated that fall. American NeXXt scholars are typically chosen from first year students with great potential and a strong STEM inclination so interest can be relayed directly to the admissions office.

**Standardized test scores (TOEFL/IELTS and SAT/ACT):**

Although there is no specific standardized test scores mandated by the NeXXt Scholars Program, many colleges list minimum scores necessary for consideration. Exact values needed on the TOEFL, IELTS, SAT, and/or ACT tests are available on the institutions' websites and in the women's college application guide ([www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm](http://www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm)).

**Matriculation as a NeXXt Scholar**

**NeXXt scholars' responsibilities to the Program:**

- Meet all college expectations and requirements for degree completion.
- Fully participate in all NeXXt Scholars Program activities and events.
- Engage with the STEM mentor on a regular—at least bi-weekly—basis and complete mentor-mentee questionnaires and other feedback forms.
- Each international and American NeXXt scholar must interact with other students in the Program, especially the NeXXt scholar from the same college.
- Assist in recruiting new NeXXt scholars, for instance, by producing video clips and/or participating in webinars via EducationUSA, holding email or Skype talks with prospective students, and similar outreach.
- Upon return trips home, international NeXXt scholars should engage in recruiting efforts of other female candidates.
- Submit an annual program evaluation survey.

**Approved STEM-related majors of the NeXXt Scholars Program:**

The NeXXt Scholars Program indicates approved STEM-related majors in accordance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security STEM-Designated Degree Program, which is updated yearly. The list can be viewed at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm>. Certain countries specify which majors an international NeXXt scholar should pursue so students are encouraged to confirm desired study areas with appropriate officials. Please contact the country's EducationUSA adviser with questions.

Although students without a committed intent to major in a STEM-related field should seek other opportunities, it is understandable that some students may find another passion while exploring a liberal arts curriculum. After encouraging the scholar to still major in STEM and minor in another field of interest, the student will remain eligible for the Program provided she takes a core set of STEM subjects at the level equivalent to at least a minor.

## Questions about the NeXXt Scholars Program

A number of resources discussed below are available to interested parties:

- To learn more about the U.S. higher education process, students are encouraged to contact their EducationUSA adviser by visiting <http://www.educationusa.info/centers.php>.
- Further information on U.S. women's colleges and a list of all such institutions is available at <http://www.womenscolleges.org/>.
- For details about the individual colleges, majors, and distinguishing features that are not discussed in the women's college application guide (which can be found at [www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm](http://www.state.gov/e/stas/2012/185518.htm)), reach out to the point-of-contact for each school listed in the summary table.
- A map indicating the locations of women's colleges participating in the NeXXt Scholars Program can be found here: <http://batchgeo.com/map/8c16060aa4501564c4e49c2bcc665313>.
- Inquiries about the NeXXt Scholars Program should be directed to [nexxtscholars@state.gov](mailto:nexxtscholars@state.gov).



**Table 2: Websites of Participating U.S. Women’s Colleges and Universities**

| Name of School                                     | Website  |
|--|--|
| Agnes Scott College                                | <a href="http://www.agnesscott.edu">www.agnesscott.edu</a>                                     |
| Barnard College                                    | <a href="http://www.barnard.edu">www.barnard.edu</a>   |
| Bay Path College                                   | <a href="http://www.baypath.edu">www.baypath.edu</a>   |
| Bennett College for Women                          | <a href="http://www.bennett.edu">www.bennett.edu</a>   |
| Brenau University                                  | <a href="http://www2009.brenau.edu/home.cfm">www2009.brenau.edu/home.cfm</a>                   |
| Bryn Mawr College                                  | <a href="http://www.brynmawr.edu/">www.brynmawr.edu/</a>                                       |
| Carlow University                                  | <a href="http://www.carlow.edu">www.carlow.edu</a>   |
| Cedar Crest College                                | <a href="http://www.cedarcrest.edu">www.cedarcrest.edu</a>                                     |
| Chatham University                                 | <a href="http://www.chatham.edu/">www.chatham.edu/</a>   |
| College of Saint Benedict                          | <a href="http://www.csbsju.edu/">www.csbsju.edu/</a>   |
| College of Saint Elizabeth                         | <a href="http://www.cse.edu">www.cse.edu</a>   |
| College of Saint Mary                              | <a href="http://www.csm.edu">www.csm.edu</a>   |
| Columbia College                                   | <a href="http://www.columbiasc.edu">www.columbiasc.edu</a>                                     |
| Converse College                                   | <a href="http://www.converse.edu/">www.converse.edu/</a>                                       |
| Cottey College                                     | <a href="http://www.cottey.edu/">www.cottey.edu/</a>   |
| Douglass Residential College at Rutgers University | <a href="http://www.douglass.rutgers.edu/index.shtml">www.douglass.rutgers.edu/index.shtml</a> |
| Hollins University                                 | <a href="http://www.hollins.edu/">www.hollins.edu/</a>   |
| Mary Baldwin College                               | <a href="http://www.mbc.edu">www.mbc.edu</a>   |
| Meredith College                                   | <a href="http://www.meredith.edu">www.meredith.edu</a>   |
| Mills College                                      | <a href="http://www.mills.edu">www.mills.edu</a>   |
| Mount Holyoke College                              | <a href="http://www.mtholyoke.edu/index.html">www.mtholyoke.edu/index.html</a>                 |
| Notre Dame of Maryland University                  | <a href="http://www.ndm.edu">www.ndm.edu</a>   |
| Saint Joseph College                               | <a href="http://www.sjc.edu">www.sjc.edu</a>   |
| Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College                    | <a href="http://www.smwc.edu">www.smwc.edu</a>   |
| Saint Mary's College                               | <a href="http://www3.saintmarys.edu/">www3.saintmarys.edu/</a>                                 |
| Salem College                                      | <a href="http://www.salem.edu">www.salem.edu</a>   |
| Scripps College                                    | <a href="http://www.scrippscollege.edu/">www.scrippscollege.edu/</a>                           |
| Simmons College                                    | <a href="http://www.simmons.edu">www.simmons.edu</a>   |
| Smith College                                      | <a href="http://www.smith.edu/">www.smith.edu/</a>   |
| Spelman College                                    | <a href="http://www.spelman.edu">www.spelman.edu</a>   |
| St. Catherine University                           | <a href="http://www.stkate.edu/">www.stkate.edu/</a>   |
| Stephens College                                   | <a href="http://www.stephens.edu">www.stephens.edu</a>   |
| Sweet Briar College                                | <a href="http://www.sbc.edu">www.sbc.edu</a>   |
| Ursuline College                                   | <a href="http://www.ursuline.edu">www.ursuline.edu</a>   |
| Wellesley College                                  | <a href="http://web.wellesley.edu/web">web.wellesley.edu/web</a>                               |
| Wesleyan College                                   | <a href="http://www.wesleyancollege.edu">www.wesleyancollege.edu</a>                           |
| Wilson College                                     | <a href="http://www.wilson.edu">www.wilson.edu</a>   |
| The Women's College of the University of Denver    | <a href="http://www.womenscollege.du.edu">www.womenscollege.du.edu</a>                         |