The Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Research Fellowship

at Hartford HealthCare

Program Overview

The **Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Research Fellowship** is a summer opportunity for one student within the Hartford Hospital Summer Student Pre-Med and Research Program, designed to provide immersive clinical and research experience in neuroscience.

Named in honor of **Joanne Berger-Sweeney, PhD**, President and Trinity Professor in Neuroscience, Emerita, the program reflects her lifelong commitment to student mentorship, academic excellence, and advancing diversity in the sciences.

About Joanne Berger-Sweeney



Joanne Berger-Sweeney is a pioneering neuroscientist and transformative leader in higher education. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley, M.P.H. from UC Berkeley, and Ph.D. in neurotoxicology from Johns Hopkins. Her groundbreaking research on the cholinergic system and neurodevelopmental disorders such as Rett syndrome has deepened understanding of learning and memory. Notably, her early work contributed to the development of galantamine (Razadyne), a widely prescribed Alzheimer's treatment.

In 2014, she became the 22nd president of Trinity College—the first African American and the first woman to hold the role. Her presidency has been defined by efforts to build a more engaged, inclusive academic community and ensure the college's long-term financial stability. She also served as chair of the board of Hartford HealthCare, deepening ties between the college and the city. Among her many honors, President Berger-Sweeney was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2018, named an AAAS Fellow in 2012, and received the Society for Neuroscience's Lifetime Mentoring Award. She retired June 2025, after 11 years of visionary leadership.

Neuroscience Research Fellowship Details

The fellow will have the opportunity to work directly with a **physician mentor in the Ayer Neuroscience Institute**, gaining firsthand exposure to neuroscience clinical research and medical practice. They will also collaborate with the Ayer NSI research team, with access to the Ayer Neuroscience Institute's Clinical Research Director, Nabil Matmati, PhD. The fellow will participate in research meetings, protocol development, data analysis, and learn to use clinical databases such as REDCap. They will also shadow physicians during rounds, observe surgeries and procedures, and attend grand rounds, journal clubs, and departmental lectures. The Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Fellow is fully embedded within the Hartford Hospital Summer Student Pre-Med and Research Program, thus receiving all opportunity within the program.

A hallmark of the program is its **strong mentorship component**, inspired by Dr. Berger-Sweeney's deep commitment to student development. She launched a mentoring program for first-year students at Trinity College and has been widely recognized for her work in this area, including receiving the **Lifetime Mentoring Award from the Society for Neuroscience** and the **National Science Foundation Young Investigator Award**.

Who Should Apply

Applicants should meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated interest in neuroscience or related fields
2. Pre-health college student who will have completed their junior year by May 2027
3. Cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher
4. Participation in leadership or service activities at school and/or in the community
5. U.S. citizen or permanent resident

Prior research experience is not required

Application Process

Applications for the Summer 2027 Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Research Fellowship are accepted through the Hartford Hospital Summer Student Pre-Med and Research Program application.

On the online application form, please select **"Yes"** when asked if you are interested in being considered for the Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Research Fellowship.

Please briefly answer the subsequent supplementary question in 1 paragraph: *"Please describe your interest in neuroscience, and how the Joanne Berger-Sweeney Neuroscience Research Fellowship Program opportunity aligns with your future career goals."*

We will be accepting complete applications for the 2027 position from **December 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027.**