

# NanoTech Institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS



## NanoExplorers

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On a rainy day in 1959, a teenage Ray Baughman had an experience that changed his life. Completely drenched, he showed up unannounced at Professor George Jeffrey's lab door at the University of Pittsburgh and asked for a job.

"The wonderful opportunity that he gave me – to do original research when I was in the 10th grade – was so important for my entire life," said Dr. Baughman, director of the NanoTech Institute at The University of Texas at Dallas.

The experience had a profound effect, setting in motion an inevitable series of events.

In the spirit of his mentor, the NanoTech Institute initiated the George A. Jeffrey NanoExplorers program. The program promotes nanotechnology-based education for the next generation of scientists and is funded by the Robert A. Welch Chair grant Dr. Baughman received in chemistry.

The NanoExplorers program was launched in the summer of 2002, when about a dozen high school students were invited to work on original research in the institute's labs.

To get involved, students must contact the institute and volunteer to work in the research labs. The program does not involve grades or credits. It is truly science for science's sake.

Training on lab safety and proper research techniques are the hallmarks of the program. Once lab procedures are mastered, students are guided by programs formulated by researchers. Later, NanoExplorers are free to choose their own research paths.

"It's amazing what advances very young people can make if they become interested in a problem," Dr. Baughman said.

NanoExplorers have coauthored scientific papers and developed and defended posters explaining their research.

An estimated 30 high school students have gone through the NanoExplorers program since its inception. Some become UTD students, others go on to Harvard, Stanford and MIT. Many come back to study at the institute each summer.

"Once a NanoExplorer, always a NanoExplorer!," as the saying goes.

*For information on how to join the NanoTech Institute NanoExplorers Program, please review [NanoExplorers Application Process](#).*

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Updated: November 15, 2005

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