

Endowment Fund Name: *Rekha and Harihara Mehendale Welcome Award Fund for International Graduate Students*

Purpose: The goal of the *Rekha and Harihara Mehendale Welcome Award Fund for International Graduate Students* is to financially assist newly enrolled international graduate students enrolled in a biomedical scientific research program, with preference to those enrolled in a toxicology program, while they are adjusting to a new country (e.g., USA). Immensely inspired by how Rekha and Harihara Mehendale offered ‘a home away from home’ to their students, this award is intended to carry on their legacy, with the intent to ease students’ transition, at least partially. The fund will be used to support the distribution of the **Mehendale Welcome Awards**.

Management: The awards from this fund will be managed and selected in a mechanism as determined by SOT Council. It is expected that the proceeds of the fund will be used to provide relocation support awards. The group identified by Council will have the responsibility for identifying the number of awards given each year, the detailed criteria for selection of the award recipients, the selection of recipients and the bestowing of the awards. The awards will carry the designation “**Mehendale Welcome Award.**”

Background: Dr. Mehendale grew up on a remote farm in India, one of seven children. Learning about a place called “abroad” in high school, and further while at the School of Agriculture in Dharwar, India, Dr. Mehendale spent hours learning about American farms and told his Father that his future lay in America. At the age of 20, deeply in debt, \$8 left in his pocket after an international trip to the US alone, Dr. Mehendale arrived in the US with a head filled with dreams. Not realizing how much a taxi would cost, he arrived on campus at NC State University with 65 cents left. Dr. Mehendale always put others’ needs ahead of his own. He would treat his students as family, bringing them into his home and giving them clothing, bedding, and food so that they could get off to a strong start.

After arriving in the USA, often it takes several weeks before international students start receiving the research/teaching assistantship from their graduate schools. This award is intended to address students’ needs during this crucial period of adjustment. Students can use the cash award to offset expenses, such as rent, household necessities, local transportation, SOT membership application fees, or other items that assist in kick-starting their graduate studies.

Funding: It is understood that the identified fund administrator shall strive to encourage gifts to the *Rekha and Harihara Mehendale Welcome Award Fund for International Graduate Students*, thereby increasing the assets in the Fund, the annual proceeds and, most importantly, the positive impact of the Fund on trainees. Friends and family of Dr. Mehendale have already committed more than \$16,000 to the new fund and will be encouraging other gifts. It is anticipated that these contributions will reach the \$50,000 threshold required for the fund to become a permanent one, given the level of interest expressed as consideration was given to creating the fund. However, if the fund does not reach the \$50,000 threshold within the required time period, it is acknowledged that the fund will become a Temporary Restricted Net Asset Fund, and the funds will be disbursed completely over a period of years specified by the Endowment Board.

Leadership for Fundraising: The identified fund administrator will be expected to provide leadership for growing assets of the Fund. This responsibility may be transferred among individuals at the discretion of the group leadership.

Approved by the Endowment Fund Board: January 9, 2023

Ratified by Council: January 18, 2023