



DR. SMRITI BARDHAN AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN GENETICS RESEARCH

This award supports professional development activities of doctoral students with a demonstrated record of excellence in genetics research in the health sciences, and therefore supports two of Dr. Bardhan's passions — outstanding discoveries in genetics and giving back to the broader community.

Dr. Smriti Bardhan (1940-2017) was born, raised and educated (culminating in a Ph.D. in 1973) in India. She was a faculty member at Women's College in Balasore, Odisha, India, before joining Northwestern Medical School in Chicago as a research scholar.

She returned to the faculty ranks first at Meharry Medical College and later at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. She was an influential geneticist and worked on tumor cell biology with publications in several high-impact journals including Nature.

She was also engaged in community service and committed to helping others.

The Dr. Smriti Bardhan Award of Excellence in Genetics Research was established in her memory by her sister and brother-in-law, retired VCU Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Dr. Tripti B. Jena and VCU Distinguished Professor of Physics Dr. Puru Jena.

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Bardhan Award Application Process:

Eligibility criteria for nominees:

- in their second year or beyond of full-time doctoral training
- have not received the award previously
- have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or greater (4.0 scale) in their current doctoral program
- have excelled in health sciences research with a genetic or genomics component as demonstrated by a research-based article published or accepted for publication in 2025

Application process:

1. In each application cycle, each Ph.D. program can nominate one student.
2. A program director can nominate a student who meets all eligibility criteria (see above) by completing this [Google form](#) that will collect identifying information along with a single PDF for each nominee with the following:
 - a. Identifying information for nominee
 1. last name
 2. first name
 3. V number
 4. e-mail address
 5. degree level
 6. degree program
 7. award sought (select Bardhan award)
 - b. A single PDF containing
 1. The nominee's unofficial transcript
 2. The nominee's CV/resume
 3. A one-page letter from the student highlighting their dissertation research project with an emphasis on the publication most relevant to genetics or genomics research
 4. A one-page letter of support from the student's advisor that describes the student's role in the published project and comments on their future promise as a researcher and educator
4. Nominations should be submitted by **January 30, 2026**.
5. The SOM's Graduate Education Executive Committee will review nominees considering the award's eligibility criteria.
6. Based on the Committee's review, SOM's Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education will select a single awardee.
7. Students can be nominated multiple times, but can receive the award a maximum of one time.