

Pilot and Exploratory Studies Research Program Funding Announcement (RFA) Claude D Pepper Older Americans Independence Centers (OAIC) Program

The goal of the Wake Forest Pepper Pilot and Exploratory Program is to promote promising new research ideas by providing funds to support production of preliminary data for the development of grant applications for external funding of larger, definitive studies.

The focus of proposals should be on understanding and/or intervening on pathways contributing to age-related functional decline and the development of physical disability in older persons, including the contributions of adipose tissue, the musculoskeletal, nervous, and circulatory systems, biomarkers, and related factors.

Innovative, multidisciplinary, and translational approaches are encouraged, as are involvement of junior faculty as well as faculty from outside fields interested in aging research.

Projects should address at least one of the main objectives of the current OAIC listed below and their role in the development of physical disability in older persons.

Objective 1. Assess the potential roles in the development of physical disability in older persons of:

- Adiposity and fat distribution
- Changes in musculoskeletal mass, composition, and function
- Components of or changes in properties of the peripheral and/or central nervous system
- Arterial blood flow to skeletal muscle, muscle perfusion, and muscle oxygen utilization
- Skeletal muscle energetics and mitochondrial function
- Age-related changes to specific organ systems (e.g. cardiovascular, kidney, liver, immune system)
- Blood, tissue, and genomic biomarkers

Objective 2. Use a translational research approach to assess factors, including biological, genomic, co-morbid and behavioral, which contribute to age-related obesity and/or sarcopenia, physical function decline, or progression to disability.

Objective 3. To develop and reliably test in clinical or pre-clinical studies novel interventions which target adiposity, peripheral or central nervous system, circulatory, vascular, body composition and/or musculoskeletal related factors for preventing the age-related decline in physical function and preventing or reversing the progression to disability.

Objective 4. Assess the role of physical or cognitive function in predicting patient-centered outcomes.

The program can fund both pilot studies as well as exploratory analyses of existing databases and archived blood and tissue samples.

For exploratory studies, in addition to other sources at the institution, investigators can access the Pepper Center Database and Repository (https://www.peppercenter-wfu.org/public/bio_materials.cfm), that includes extensive phenotypic data on over 3000 older subjects and patients, including body composition, physical function, quality of life, blood, skeletal muscle, and adipose tissue

Preliminary data are not required to be competitive.

Eligibility Information

Basic science and clinical research projects are encouraged. These may originate from investigators at Reynolda or Medical Center campuses, and can include collaborations with other institutions, particularly those with Pepper Centers.

Award Information

The Pepper Older Americans Independence Center is funded by a grant from the NIH. Pilot awards will be funded at a level of up to \$25,000 for one year only.

Application Process

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Investigators are strongly encouraged to submit a 1-2 page LOI by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday December 1, 2015 at the latest. Earlier submission will allow earlier feedback from the Pepper Core and more time to plan and execute your application

ePILOT application system

- ePILOT is hosted on the Wake Forest Pilot web page which provides an entry point to the application process and a description of current pilot funding opportunities available across the institution.
- Pilot Web Page; Access ePILOT via BRSA website

LOIs requirements (submitted electronically through ePILOT)

- Descriptive title of proposed research
- Submitting Investigator: Name, institution, academic rank, e-mail address
- Co-Investigators: Name, institution, and academic rank
- Description of study/abstract
- Brief description of proposed allocation of funds (include as part of study/abstract description)

2. Complete Application

If selected, applicants submitting a Letter of Intent will be invited to submit a complete pilot application and will be provided a coded link to access the previously submitted LOI application to continue the full application process. Individuals invited to apply must submit the full application by 5:00PM on Monday, January 11, 2016.

Application Guidelines

The application must include

- A multi-disciplinary team including at least one team member from Wake Forest.
- A commitment to use pilot data to develop a future subsequent, larger translational team-oriented grant application, or for exploratory analyses of existing datasets.
- Applicants should outline how the proposed project moves research in a field forward toward addressing health care needs within the population.

Pilot Proposal Application Requirements

- Project Title (limit 81 characters)
- Anticipated Start/End Date
- Submitting Investigator, Department, and Email
- Co-Investigator(s), Institution, Department
- Abstract (max. of 30 lines)
- Specific Aims Page (1 page)
- Research Plan (6 pages)
- Protection of Human Subjects (1 page)
- Specific requirements of RFA (1 page)
- References
- Budget Template and budget justification
- NIH format Biosketches
- Letters of support

Award Expectations

- Presentation of research at Aging Center, TSI and potential community-based venues
- Participation in the reviewer pool for future pilot grant reviews
- Provide a detailed progress report semi-annually

Application Process Timeline

Letter of Intent deadline	12/01/2015
Invitation to apply for full pilot application	1 week following your LOI submission
Complete pilot application deadline	1/11/2016
Anticipated award announcement	03/04/2016

Budget Preparation

Support may be requested for technical staff salaries, testing, animals, supplies, and reagents. Some effort for investigator support may be provided if needed.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed for their relevance to the Wake Forest Pepper OAIC theme and their adherence to RFA guidelines. Proposals which are deemed to be the most promising in terms of generating important new information supporting subsequent grant applications with a likelihood of funding will be the most competitive.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Pepper Center Group during preparation of their applications.

Pilot and Exploratory Studies Core (PESC)	Thomas Register, PhD Dalane Kitzman, MD
Clinical Research Core (CRC)	Jack Rejeski, PhD Tony Marsh, PhD
Biostatistics and Research Information Systems Core (BIC)	Mike Miller, PhD Iris Leng, PhD
Integrative Biology Core (IBC)	Barbara Nicklas, PhD
Bio Imaging Resource Core (BRC)	Gregory Hundley, MD

Submission Procedure

Administrative inquiries should be directed to Abby Archer, Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine at 713-8504, (aarcher@wakehealth.edu)

Inquiries are strongly encouraged so that we can provide specific guidance in developing relevant and successful proposals. For additional information or clarification please contact Dr. Tom Register at 716-1557 (register@wakehealth.edu) or Dr. Dalane Kitzman at 716-3274 (dkitzman@wakehealth.edu).

Submit **ONLINE** via Integrated ePilot Submission at the BRSA website [HERE](#)