

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

The Wake Forest Pepper Pilot and Exploratory Program promotes promising new research ideas by providing funds for generation of preliminary data for the development of grant applications for external funding of larger, definitive studies. The program funds pilots as well as exploratory analyses of existing databases and archived blood and tissue samples.

Proposals should focus on understanding and/or intervening on pathways contributing to age-related functional decline and the development of physical disability in older persons.

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
- Body composition, musculoskeletal mass, and function
- Properties of the peripheral and/or central nervous system
- Blood flow to skeletal muscle, muscle perfusion, and muscle oxygen utilization
- Bioenergetics 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 biological, genomic, co-morbid, behavioral, and other factors which contribute to age-related obesity and/or sarcopenia, physical function decline, or progression to disability.

Objective 3. Develop and test in clinical or pre-clinical studies novel interventions which target contributors to age-related decline in physical function in order to prevent or reverse the progression to disability.

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

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](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. However, applications should include enough information to allow reviewers to determine the likelihood of success.

### **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 are generally funded at a level of up to \$25,000 for one year or \$50,000 for 2 years.

## Application Process

### 1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Investigators must submit a 2 page LOI by 5:00 p.m. Monday, October 3 (at the latest). This mandatory requirement is pivotal to the process. LOIs will be reviewed for their relevance to the Wake Forest Pepper OAIC theme and their adherence to LOI requirements. Those selected to submit a proposal and 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. We encourage you to consult with the Pepper Center Group during preparation of your LOI and application (if invited to submit).

#### Pepper Cores

Pilot and Exploratory Studies Core (PESC)  
Clinical Research Core (CRC)  
Biostatistics and Research Information Systems Core (BIC)  
Integrative Biology Core (IBC)  
Bio Imaging Resource Core (BRC)

#### Pepper Core Leaders

Thomas Register, PhD / Dalane Kitzman, MD  
Jack Rejeski, PhD / Tony Marsh, PhD  
Mike Miller, PhD / Iris Leng, PhD  
Barbara Nicklas, PhD  
Gregory Hundley, MD

#### LOIs requirements

- Descriptive title of proposed research
- Submitting Investigator: Name, institution, academic rank, e-mail address
- Co-Investigators: Name, institution, and academic rank
- Hypothesis, rationale, significance and aims of the study
- Description of study/plans
- Brief description of proposed allocation of funds

### 2. Complete Application on basis of LOI

If selected, you will be invited, within a week after the LOI deadline, to submit a complete pilot application. Individuals invited to apply must submit the full application by 5:00PM on Monday, November 14, 2016.

#### The study should 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.

#### Application Process Timeline

Letter of Intent deadline	Monday 10/3/2016 by 5:00 pm
Full Application deadline	Monday 11/14/2016 by 5:00 pm
Funding date	Early 2017

### 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.

### Submission Procedure

**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](mailto:register@wakehealth.edu)) or Dr. Dalane Kitzman at 716-3274 ([dkitzman@wakehealth.edu](mailto:dkitzman@wakehealth.edu)). **Administrative inquiries** should be directed to Abby Archer, Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine at 713-8504, ([aarcher@wakehealth.edu](mailto:aarcher@wakehealth.edu)). All LOIs and full applications should be sent via email containing a single pdf document to Ms. Archer.