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CaMPR-BASIC: a CTSA pilot grant mechanism to accelerate translational team science at Columbia University

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Introduction



With demands to bring new medical cures to the public faster and less expensively, and in light of ever-shrinking research funding sources, the importance of team science is now stronger than ever. In 2006, the Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research was charged with helping bridge basic and clinical/translational research to bring effective, efficient strategies into medical practice. We developed a novel pilot award, the CaMPR initiative (Collaborative and Multidisciplinary Pilot Research) to do the following:

- support multidisciplinary research
 - train and mentor a new generation of multidisciplinary research teams
 - expand and optimize the utilization of CUMC's outstanding research resources.
- Up until now, CaMPR investigators have been almost exclusively based in clinical departments, suggesting the need to target a pilot grant program aimed at basic scientists interested in moving into translational research.

CaMPR-BASIC Aims

CaMPR-BASIC takes the next step towards the development of multidisciplinary teams by offering support for collaborations between researchers from basic science departments across the university and clinical/translational investigators on the medical campus.

- Research focus should be on PILOT STUDIES that will lead to independent, external funding.
- **The project must be focused at the pre-clinical level, with relevance to a clinical problem.**
- The goal of the program is to bring clinical focus and experience to the pre-clinical research, i.e., to ensure that the cell or animal model is appropriate, that the target molecule is specific, and that the pre-clinical approach has potential for significant translation to humans.

DEFINITION OF CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

RESEARCH DIRECTED TOWARD HUMAN DISEASES:

DIRECT CONTACT WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS, INCLUDING THERAPEUTIC TRIALS, STUDIES OF GROUPS OF PATIENTS OR CLINICAL OUTCOMES;

or
LABORATORY STUDIES OF HUMAN BODY FLUIDS, TISSUES, CELLS OR DEVICES;

or
STUDIES IN CELLS OR ANIMAL MODELS OF A DISEASE IN WHICH A THERAPEUTIC APPROACH AND/OR MECHANISM OF DISEASE IS BEING INVESTIGATED

Eligibility

- Applicants are required to **form a new collaborative team consisting of two Principal Investigators at the level of Assistant Professor:** one from a basic science department at either the CUMC campus (eg. Genetics, Physiology) or from the downtown campus (eg. Biomedical Engineering, Biology)
- and one from a clinical department from any of the 4 schools on the medical campus (Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Public Health)
- The new collaborative team may not have produced any publications together nor shared prior research funding.

FIND A COLLABORATOR

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the Irving Institute's CUSP tool (Columbia University Scientific Profiles) to seek out potential collaborators in disciplines other than their own and find CUMC investigators who share a common research interest. For example, an investigator interested in 'diabetes' can do a simple word search at: <http://irvinginstitute.columbia.edu/cusp/>

Grant Features & Application Process

- **Award Amount:** \$40,000 (three awards /cycle)
- **Term of Award:** One (1) Year
- **Funding Start Date:** May 1, 2014

APPLICATION PROCESS. CaMPR-BASIC involves a two-phase or two-step application process*.

PHASE I: LETTER OF INTENT. The Letter of Intent should provide the initial basis for the review of both the scientific merit of the proposed study and feasibility of the newly-formed interdisciplinary team.

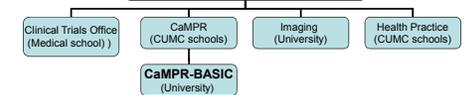
Due: Monday, December 2, 2013

The Letter of Intent should include:

- Project title and team member contact information
- Brief abstract (no more than 300 words)
- **Signatures of approval from both investigators' Department Chair/Research Dean are required.**
- In 1-2 pages, briefly describe:
 - Specific Aims
 - Rationale,
 - Experimental approach
 - Public health implications
- How this new collaboration will benefit both PIs, as well as the greater CUMC community.
- NIH-style biosketches

*We strongly encourage applicants to seek consultation with relevant Irving Institute Resources prior to submission of this proposal (e.g., Design & Biostatistics, Regulatory and Ethics, Community Engagement, Biomedical Informatics).

PILOT STUDIES RESOURCE



PHASE II: FULL APPLICATION (only after LOI Approval)

The Study Protocol may not exceed five (5) single spaced, typed pages, excluding references. The Protocol will be judged on the basis of each team's response to the following questions:

- **Goals:** What are you planning to do?
- **Rationale:** Why is it worth doing? Justify the specific strengths of the investigative team (describe the specific roles of the lead investigators). How is the proposed work interdisciplinary? What is innovative about your collaboration?
- **Methods:** How will the study be conducted? Include statistical analysis, e.g., size, power, controls, analysis of data.
- **Future Plans:** What is the next step after award? Provide a detailed plan and timeline for grant applications to the NIH, private foundations, or other external funding sources.

NIH-style biosketch for each investigator: Max of 4 pages per investigator (including Other Support).

Budget: include detailed justification

Reviewers will use a scoring system based on a 5-point scale and judge each application on the basis of overall fit with the eligibility criteria, multidisciplinary, potential of the junior investigators for independent research career, and scientific merit.