Program to Enhance the Retention of Clinicians (PERK)

funded by
The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Background
MUSC/MUHA is the recipient of an award from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) through a new Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists program aimed at improving the retention and advancement of junior-level physician scientists who face special challenges of balancing their professional work with caregiving responsibilities. The objective of our program – called PERK (Program to Enhance the Retention of Clinicians) – is to provide supplemental funds to support ongoing clinical research efforts of eligible faculty.

Leadership
Kathleen T. Brady, MD, PhD
Vice President for Research
Distinguished University Professor

Marc I. Chimowitz, MBChB
Associate Dean for Faculty Development
Professor of Neurology

Request for Applications
This announcement is a request for applications from eligible faculty. Applications for this funding cycle are due by 5:00 pm EDT on Friday, June 1, 2018.

Eligibility
Eligible candidates must:

- Hold an MD or DO degree and have an active U.S. medical license.
- Have a full-time tenure-track faculty appointment at MUSC at the Instructor or Assistant Professor level at the time of application.
- Be conducting a clinical research project and have research support as Principal Investigator on a mentored career development grant, research project grant, or other equivalent research grant award from a federal or non-federal source (e.g., foundation or professional society), and have at least 1 year of support remaining on the grant at time of application for the supplement.
  - If the parent grant involves clinical trials, then it must be registered in a public registry of clinical trials, such as ClinicalTrials.gov.
- Demonstrate a compelling need for this supplemental research support as it relates to significant extraprofessional caregiving responsibilities.

Definition of Clinical Research
For this program, clinical research is defined as the scientific investigation of the etiology, prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of human disease using human subjects, human populations, or materials of human origin. Included in the definition are the studies that utilize tissues or pathogens only if they can be linked to a patient. Any research conducted as a part of the Grant must meet DDCF’s definition of clinical research.

Scope of Supplement
The proposed supplement activities may not be independent of the parent grant; the research objectives must be within the scope of the peer reviewed and approved parent project. The supplement’s modifications to the parent project should increase or preserve the overall impact of that project consistent with its originally approved objectives and purposes. The supplement funds are to be used solely toward supporting clinical research associated with the project.
Funds and Duration
Typical awards are between $5,000-$25,000 of direct costs for a period of up to one year (12 months) but larger awards are possible if the budget and need is well-justified. The proposed budget period must be within the currently approved project period for the existing parent grant.

Progress reports and/or meetings will be required at the mid-point of the award with a final report due at the end of the designated project period. If requested, the potential for renewal will be contingent on productivity (as documented in the progress reports) and ongoing need. Funding renewal must be recommended by the Review Panel. Awards are not transferable to another institution or another Principal Investigator.

Use of Funds
Funds may be requested for standard allowable expense categories such as technical support (including fringe benefits), grant writing support, buy-out of time to reduce clinical load, research supplies, coordinator support, and other direct costs including, but not limited to, research subject compensation and data analysis/statistical support. PERK funds may not be used to purchase general purpose equipment (e.g., computers) or for costs associated with childcare or other extraprofessional caregiving costs. The supplemental funds may not be used to support experiments that use animals or primary tissues derived from animals.

Submission Process
The PERK Program will use the SCTR Portal for electronic submission https://sctrweb2.musc.edu/appsite/sctr_retreat_pilot_applications/new. (Use the “Center & Department Pilot Applications” button.) Candidates must submit an application packet containing the following information:

- Title of parent grant; applicant's name, department, and faculty appointment; office or laboratory address; telephone number; e-mail address; U.S. medical license number.
- Specific Aims from the parent grant.
- NIH Biographical Sketch of the candidate in the new NIH format.
- List of current and pending support in NIH format.
- IRB approval letter(s), if applicable.
- Proposed Detailed Budget (between $5,000-$25,000 of direct costs for a period of up to 12 months; larger awards are possible if the budget and need is well-justified)
- Budget Justification that clearly demonstrates the amount of funds requested, the time period for the requested funds, and how the requested funds will contribute to the candidate’s scientific and/or career development. Any budgetary overlap with the parent grant should also be addressed.
- Letters of Support: (1) applicant’s department chair or division chief who can address the quality and relevance of the environment for scientific and professional development of the candidate, including institutional commitment of resources; (2) mentor or research colleague who can address the candidate’s progress and potential for research independence.
- Personal Statement (up to 1 page) describing extraprofessional caregiving responsibilities and the anticipated impact of the supplemental funding.
- Please Note: coded data about PERK applicants and awardees will be collected as part of an ongoing evaluation project conducted by the University of Michigan.

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**Review, Prioritization, and Awards**

Each application will be reviewed by reviewers with appropriate expertise. Applications will be scored on the 1-9 point NIH scale and recommendations for funding will be primarily based on these scores. Scoring will focus on the following areas: 1) potential of the candidate to develop as an independent and productive researcher, 2) academic achievements, 3) institutional commitment to the career development of the candidate, 4) *demonstration of a compelling need for the supplement related to being a caregiver*, and 5) likelihood that the budgeted funds will contribute substantially to the scientific and career development of the candidate.

Criteria for funding will include: 1) reviewers’ recommendations as defined in the summary statement; 2) alignment with the mission and aims of the *DDCF Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists* program; and 3) likelihood that the research effort will be productive and lead to extramural funding and subsequent promotion.
Oversight, Mentoring, and Evaluation
PERK Scholars will be expected to submit an interim and final progress report with up-to-date budget expenditures as requested. The final report will be due within 60 days of the project period end date. In addition, each PERK Scholar will regularly meet with the Steering/Mentoring Committee to formally review the submitted progress report and discuss progress on the project, including data analysis and plans for manuscript and/or grant preparation. Their designated mentor, if applicable, will participate in the discussion as well.

Coded data about PERK applicants and awardees will be collected as part of an ongoing evaluation project conducted by the University of Michigan. It is requested that all PERK applicants and awardees participate in the IRB-approved assessments, surveys, and interviews that are part of this evaluation.

Assurances and Compliance
Funding will not be released to the PERK Scholar until all applicable institutional human, biosafety protocols and any other required regulatory documents (e.g., INDs, IDEs, certifications of training in protection of human subjects) have been approved and copies sent to the Director.

Anticipated Outcomes
The short and long term outcomes of the DDCF grant are:
- Generation of critical preliminary data to support new investigator-initiated research grants.
- Extramural funding of grant applications that were developed from a project that was initiated and supported using the supplemental funds.
- Retention and promotion of PERK Scholars within academic ranks.
- Long term sustainability of the PERK Scholars program as “Extra Hands” support through institutional commitments.

Questions
Questions related to this opportunity may be addressed to Diana Lee-Chavarria at leeachar@musc.edu or 843-792-8205.