

TRI-DDEI Strategies for Training and Advancing under-represented Researchers (STARs) Program Request for Applications

Background

Research shows that diverse teams working together and capitalizing on innovative ideas and distinct perspectives outperform homogenous teams.¹ Scientists and trainees from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. Benefits that flow from a diverse scientific workforce include fostering scientific innovation, enhancing global and national competitiveness, contributing to robust learning environments for our students, improving research quality, and advancing the likelihood that underserved populations participate in, and benefit from health research.^{2;3} For example, underrepresented minority (URM) patients are more likely to choose a URM physician and are more satisfied with their care when a URM physician leads it.^{1;4} However, minority faculty still have inequitable access to information, professional development, and research resources.^{5;6} The problem is not unique to UAMS, it is a societal problem across institutions and funding agencies.⁶ Grant award probability of African American principal investigators (PIs) still remains at 55% that of White PIs with similar academic achievement.⁷ A structured research-mentoring program could help strengthen the research acumen of minority faculty, and provide a community of belonging and real support to ensure their success in becoming independent investigators.⁸

The TRI-DDEI STARs Program

The TRI-DDEI STARs program aims to build a peer support community of URM faculty in Biomedical, Clinical, Behavioral, and Social Sciences Research to support career development and research success. This will be done by:

- Establishing a structured peer support group that engages in a 3-month grant training and development program.⁹ This model addresses issues of isolation often felt by URM faculty in academic settings.⁶ It also provides and encourages the development of innovative research ideas in a safe environment. This peer support group can also help improve confidence and self-efficacy in clinical and translational research development and execution by under-represented faculty.
- Providing practical research skill development and grantsmanship.
- Offering access to research mentors and research support services, i.e. IRB protocol development, recruitment, etc.
- Supplying \$10,000 in seed funding as a TRI DEI Equity, Diversity, and Grantsmanship Expertise (EDGE) research project.

In addition, the STARs Program aims to promote applications to the TRI Pilot Studies and other funding opportunities, allowing scholars to build their proposal with TRI mentors and apply for follow-on funding to build upon their EDGE funding. STARs scholars will be expected to apply for follow-on funding (intramural or extramural) within 18 months of completing the STARs didactics.

Join us on June 28, 2023, at 11:30 AM or July 13, 2023, at 1:30 PM for an information session to answer your questions. Please register for the [STARs EDGE Informational Session](#).

Program Leadership

The TRI-DDEI STARs program is led by a multi-disciplinary team that will provide the didactics, grant training and review, and ongoing mentorship of the scholars. The leaders are:

- Antiño R. Allen, PhD, Associate Professor, Associate Director of Diversity Initiatives at TRI
- Mario Schootman, PhD, Professor, Co-Director of TRI's Workforce Development Program, Vice-Chair for Mentoring & Innovation, Department of Medicine
- Jessica Snowden, MD, Professor and Vice Dean for Research, Co-Director of TRI's Workforce Development Program

Eligibility

1. Eligible participants should have a terminal degree; must be full-time faculty at UAMS, UAMS-NW, ACH/ACRI, or CAVHS who hold non-temporary positions at the rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, or Associate Professor; and must be a US citizen or permanent resident.
2. Faculty must meet the **NIH definition of underrepresentation in Biomedical, Clinical, Behavioral, and Social Sciences Research**, as follows:
 - Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as described in the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended](#).
 - Individuals from the following racial and ethnic groups: Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.
 - Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are defined as those who meet two or more of the following criteria (<https://diversity.nih.gov/about-us/population-underrepresented>):
 - Were homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
 - Were in the foster care system, as defined by the Administration for Children and Families;
 - Were eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years;
 - Have/had no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor's degree (first-generation college graduate);
 - Were eligible for Federal Pell Grants;
 - Received support from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) as a child;
 - Grew up in one of the following areas:
 - a U.S. rural area, as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer, or
 - a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-designated Low-Income and Health Professional Shortage Areas

Use of funds

A broad range of research activities, including but not limited to, consultant fees, supplies, software, transcribing and analyzing existing data, data collection, publication fees, participant incentives, and other activities to prepare for applying for extramural funding. **Funds must be expended within one year of the award date.**

Award amount: \$10,000

Application Process

All applicants are required to use our online application system to enter their basic information and application information. The application must be completed by 5:00 pm, July 28, 2023, through the TRI's [Apply Grant Application](#) system. Applicants are required to establish an account with Apply in order to submit for this funding opportunity. [Click here for instructions](#) on how to make an account in Apply. Contact [Crystal Sparks](#) at 501-526-8730 if you have any questions.

The application will include:

- Faculty demographics
- Self-reported eligibility that the applicant is from a group meeting the NIH definition
- Application research summary letter (no more than 2 pages) that must contain the following:
 - Research questions to be addressed and/or specific aims
 - Project summary
 - How your project aligns with [TRI's mission](#) to develop new knowledge and approaches that will measurably address the complex health challenges of rural and underrepresented populations

Timeline:

RFA Released:	May 30, 2023
Informational Session:	June 28, 2023
Informational Session:	July 13, 2023
Deadline to Apply:	July 28, 2023
Scholars Notified:	August 11, 2023
Orientation:	August 30, 2023, 1:30 pm
Didactics Begin:	September 14, 2023
EDGE Funding Starts:	January 2024

Outcomes/End of Program Report

Each STARs Scholar is expected to:

- Submit a final research proposal developed over the course of the didactic training for EDGE funding
- Submit for follow-on funding to any intra- or extramural funding opportunity within 18 months of completing STARs didactics
- Submit a manuscript for publication within 18 months of completing STARs didactics. **TRI will pay publication fees for one manuscript accepted for publication.**
- Participate in pre- and post-surveys on grant writing self-assessments.
- Provide feedback to the program.

Program Structure and Schedule

Phase 1 – Didactics, proposal development	Phase 2 – Project implementation and dissemination
<input type="checkbox"/> The basics of grantsmanship – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of the knowledge gap and strategy to fill it ○ Formulating a central hypothesis <input type="checkbox"/> Developing the specific aims and impact sections <input type="checkbox"/> Writing the significance and innovation sections <input type="checkbox"/> Writing the research plan <input type="checkbox"/> Future studies and creating a powerful title for your proposal	<input type="checkbox"/> EDGE Project implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly WIPs/check-ins <input type="checkbox"/> Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abstract submission ○ Final paper ○ Submit for TRI pilot award or another mechanism

Date (maybe subject to change)	Program Activity	Deliverable/assignment
~Aug 4	STARs Scholars Selected	Project summary and application due July 28
Aug 11	Awardees announced	Notice of selection sent to awardees and kickoff of didactics announced
Aug 30 1:30 pm	Didactic Kickoff/Overview of Program	Homework: 250-word abstract of future proposal (Due: 9/8/23)
Sept 14 1:00 pm	Basics of grantsmanship, specifics of the TRI pilot grant, identification of the knowledge gap and strategy to fill it, formulation of central hypothesis	Homework: ~1-page justification for your hypothesis, single-sentence hypothesis, Specific Aims (rough draft) and impact drafts (Due: 9/23/23)
Sept 28 12:00 pm	Review of the Hypotheses, Discuss Specific Aims, Impact sections, Significance, and Innovation sections	Homework: Finalizing Specific Aims and Impact; writing Significance and Innovation sections (0.5 page) (Due: 10/7/23)

Oct 12 1:00 pm	Review of Specific Aims and Impact page, Significance, and Innovation sections. How to write Approach section: basics.	Homework: Writing first half of Approach section (~1 page); Internal group peer-review of the Specific Aims page. (Due: 10/20/23)
Oct 27 11:00 am	Review of the 1 st Aim/half of Approach sections. How to write Pitfalls and Alternative Approaches in the Approach section	Homework: Finalizing the Approach section (~1.25 pages). (Due: 11/3/23)
Nov 09 1:00 pm	Review of the Approach sections. How to write Future Studies, Plan for Extramural funding and create a powerful title for your proposal	Homework: Future studies, Plan for extramural funding (~.25 page), and Title. (Due: 11/18/23)
Nov 29 1:00 pm	Review of Future Studies, Extramural Plan and Title. How to peer-review	Internal group peer-review of the entire proposal (Due: 12/9/23)
Dec 14 1:00 pm	Peer reviews presented and discussion/review of final proposal and presentation of TRI pilot RFA	Final proposal after editing for comments for EDGE funding. (Due: 12/28/23)

References

- (1) Gomez LE, Bernet P. Diversity improves performance and outcomes. *J Natl Med Assoc* 2019; 111(4):383-392.
- (2) Kandler A, Laland KN. An investigation of the relationship between innovation and cultural diversity. *Theor Popul Biol* 2009; 76(1):59-67.
- (3) Hofstra B, Kulkarni VV, Munoz-Najar GS, He B, Jurafsky D, McFarland DA. The Diversity-Innovation Paradox in Science. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 2020; 117(17):9284-9291.
- (4) Silver JK, Bean AC, Slocum C, Poorman JA, Tenforde A, Blauwet CA et al. Physician Workforce Disparities and Patient Care: A Narrative Review. *Health Equity* 2019; 3(1):360-377.
- (5) Fang D, Moy E, Colburn L, Hurley J. Racial and ethnic disparities in faculty promotion in academic medicine. *JAMA* 2000; 284(9):1085-1092.
- (6) Pololi L, Cooper LA, Carr P. Race, disadvantage and faculty experiences in academic medicine. *J Gen Intern Med* 2010; 25(12):1363-1369.
- (7) Ginther DK, Schaffer WT, Schnell J, Masimore B, Liu F, Haak LL et al. Race, ethnicity, and NIH research awards. *Science* 2011; 333(6045):1015-1019.
- (8) Bridges DR, Davidson RA, Odegard PS, Maki IV, Tomkowiak J. Interprofessional collaboration: three best practice models of interprofessional education. *Med Educ Online* 2011; 16.
- (9) Chue S. Professional learning communities for enhancing faculty development initiatives. *Med Teach* 2016; 38(12):1288.