

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN GERIATRICS CENTER

PILOT GRANT COMPETITION - 2008

The University of Michigan Geriatrics Center announces the availability of funds to support pilot/feasibility research in Geriatrics and in the Biology of Aging. Funding for pilot project grants is provided by the National Institute on Aging via the Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center, directed by Jeffrey B. Halter, M.D., and the Nathan Shock Center of Excellence in Aging Research, directed by John Faulkner, Ph.D., and by a grant from the John A. Hartford Foundation. This year's grant competition is organized by the Shock Center's Research and Development Core, directed by Dr. Susan V. Brooks.

Proposals may involve biomedical science, clinical physiology and pathophysiology, health services research, behavioral and social science research, or investigations into the basic biology of aging. The Pepper Center has a particular interest in studies that relate to the connections between the aging process and methods that might improve the health and independence of elderly people. The Nathan Shock Center is particularly interested in proposals that address fundamental questions in the genetics and cell and molecular biology of aging, as well as mechanisms of aging in specific organ systems. Review criteria are listed on the following page.

Eligibility: Pilot grant funding is available only to those who have full-time faculty positions at the University of Michigan. Most pilot grants will be awarded to junior faculty members, but more senior scientists are also encouraged to apply if they are seeking support for new initiatives in aging or geriatrics research.

Funding: Projects are supported for one year. A second year of funding is sometimes possible, but requires a competitive renewal application. Individual awards will not exceed \$40,000 per year, plus applicable indirect costs. Funds are generally not made available for faculty salary or for major equipment purchases without special, explicit justification (example: summer salary for a faculty member with a 9-month appointment). Funding is available to support 5 - 7 awards this year.

Review criteria: The primary criterion for evaluation of applications is the likelihood that the studies proposed will answer an important question relevant to the health of elderly people, or will provide fundamental insights into the cell and molecular biology of aging. Approaches that involve basic bioscience, clinical research, social and behavioral questions, and problems in health policy are equally likely to be considered for funding. In addition to scientific merit, we will also consider several other secondary criteria in making awards, including whether the research is likely to provide pilot data that may result in the submission of a later application for extramural research support, whether the project is highly relevant to the problems in biogerontology and/or geriatric medicine, and whether support is likely to be valuable to the applicant in developing a career as an independent

scientist committed to research in aging and its cognate fields. Most, but not all, awards typically go to faculty members who have not yet reached the rank of Associate Professor.

Interactions with Center Research Cores. Successful applicants are eligible to make use of resources provided by the Research Resources Cores available within the Nathan Shock and Pepper Center programs. The Nathan Shock Center sponsors core facilities that include an Aging Transgenic Rodent/Pathology Core, a Contractility Core, an In Vivo Functionality Core, and a Transgenic Animal Model Core. Pepper Center programs include the Biomechanics, Aged Rodents, Methodology and Data Management, Genomic Analysis, and Human Subjects Cores. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project during its development with relevant Core directors, who may be able to provide access to resources without cost to the applicant. Additional information on the Centers' Core resources, including contact information for Core Directors who can assist with development of pilot grant applications, can be found at:

<http://www.med.umich.edu/geriatrics/research/ClaudePepper/>
<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/nsc/home>

Application Procedure: Individuals interested in obtaining **applications** should contact Jane Heibel (jheibel@umich.edu). Completed applications, in the form of a PDF or Word DOC file, must be submitted to Ms. [add period after Ms] Heibel, to arrive no later than 4 pm on **February 4th, 2008**. All applications will be reviewed for scientific merit by *ad hoc* peer reviewers selected from outside the University of Michigan, and then by the Geriatrics Center Research Operating Committee and the Nathan Shock Center Steering Committee for relevance to each Center's thematic goals. Applicants will be notified of the funding decision by the end of May, 2008, with funding likely to be available by July 1, 2008.

Questions regarding the Pilot Grant Program should be addressed to Dr. Susan Brooks, at 936-2147, or via email to svbrooks@umich.edu.

Supplementary Information

Geriatrics Center 2008 Pilot Grant Program

Review criteria: The primary criterion for evaluation of applications is the likelihood that the studies proposed will provide fundamental insights into the cell and molecular biology of aging, or will answer an important question relevant to the health of elderly people. Approaches that involve basic bioscience, clinical research, social and behavioral questions, and problems in health policy are equally likely to be considered for funding. In addition to scientific merit, we will also consider several other secondary criteria in making awards, including whether the research is likely to provide pilot data that may result in the submission of a later application for extramural research support, whether the project is highly relevant to the problems in biogerontology and/or geriatric medicine, and whether support is likely to be valuable to the applicant in developing a career as an independent scientist committed to research in aging and its cognate fields.

Recipients of Pilot Grant awards are eligible to make full use of the Centers' sets of Research Resource Cores. While developing their plans, applicants are urged to contact the Director(s) of any of the relevant Cores for advice and information about services that might be of use to the project. A list of the Cores follows.

Pepper Center Research Resource Cores:

Human Subjects & Assessment Core: maintains a database of elderly individuals who have volunteered to participate in research studies. Can provide screening data and/or contacts with elderly volunteers, and assist in assessment of functional outcomes of interventions. **Contact: Jersey Liang, 936-2134.**

Biomechanics Core: provides techniques and equipment for quantification of physical functioning. Resources include sophisticated instrumentation for assessment of position, movement, and torque; assistance with computer modeling of the elements of motor acts; and guidance in the development of research protocols in geriatric biomechanics. **Contact: James Ashton-Miller, 763-2320, jaam@umich.edu.**

Core Facility for Aged Rodents: provides guidance in the selection of strains, ages, and species for analysis of aging and disease in rodent models. **Contact: Richard Miller, 936-2122, millerr@umich.edu.**

Methodology, Data Management, and Analysis Core: provides advice and assistance in study design, utilization and construction of databases, and statistical analysis. Services range from brief consultation to full-scale collaboration in selected cases. **Contact: Brant Fries, 936-2107, bfries@umich.edu.**

Genomic Analysis Core: provides genotyping services for mouse and human alleles, and advice on integrating genetic methodology into studies of aging in humans or rodent models. **Contact: David Burke, 647-3149, dtburke@umich.edu.**

Nathan Shock Center Research Resource Cores

Transgenic Animal Model Core: provides production of new transgenic mouse or rat strains or gene-targeted (“knock-out”) mice of particular value for aging research. Consultation and training in all phases of transgenic and gene targeting research is also available. **Contact: Sally Camper, 763-0682 or scamper@umich.edu.**

Aging Transgenic Rodent/Pathology Core: provides support for producing aged rodents of useful genotypes, and for providing pathological analysis of rodents utilized in investigations of the cellular and molecular biology of aging and the relationship of the aging process to late life diseases. **Contact: Evan Keller, 615-0280 or etkeller@umich.edu.**

In Vivo Functionality Core: provides facilities and technical assistance for a variety of specialized *in vivo* physiological assessments of aging rodents. Also available are training and assistance in numerous rodent surgical procedures. **Contact: Joe Metzger, 763-0560, or metzgerj@umich.edu.**

Contractility Core: provides facilities, expertise, and technical support for measuring contractility of whole skeletal muscles and small bundles of intact muscle fibers. Instruction and training in the knowledge and skills necessary to measure contractility as well as the development of techniques and/or construction of specialized apparatus for measuring contractility are also available. **Contact John Faulkner, 764-4378 or jafaulk@umich.edu.**