

## **Career Catalyst (C<sup>2</sup>) Award – DRAFT**

### **Request for Applications**

To increase the diversity and number of career development opportunities offered through the San Antonio Older American Independence Center (OAIC), we are accepting applications for **Career Catalyst (C<sup>2</sup>) Awards**. These awards are a part of the newly approved RL5 mechanism within the Research Career Development Core of the OAIC. The C<sup>2</sup> Award's goal is to provide essential focused support for 12 months to enable the candidate to submit an NIH R21, R01, K, VA Career Development or equivalent grant award.

The target group for this award includes Post-Doctoral Fellows, Instructors, and Assistant Professors at the UT Health Science Center and our OAIC Partner institutions (including the University of Texas San Antonio, UT-Austin College of Pharmacy, and the Texas A&M San Antonio). A secondary goal is to create investigative linkages and networks among the OAIC, the Barshop Institute, and scientists in the San Antonio and South Texas region.

Suitability for a C<sup>2</sup> Award will be determined by:

- (a) How well the proposed research aligns with the San Antonio OAIC's focus and goals to develop pharmacologic interventions that affect the biology of aging and age-related diseases, and
- (b) the likelihood that OAIC support will catalyze the submission of an R-series grant to the NIH (or other appropriate research support) within 12 months.

To determine if you are eligible for a C<sup>2</sup> Award, please make an appointment to meet with the OAIC Research Education and Career Development directors (Drs. Peter Hornsby and Al Fisher) to discuss your career goals, mentorship needs, and opportunities for development into an investigator, and initially assess the appropriateness of targeted OAIC support.

Following the interview with the RCDC directors, the next step will be a seminar presentation by the candidate and faculty mentor(s) to the OAIC and Barshop faculty. The candidate will present a plan for how targeted support will help them submit an R series grant to the NIH. For example, this workshop/seminar will describe the key experiments needed to get preliminary data for the grant application. The candidate and their mentor(s) will receive verbal and written constructive feedback from the OAIC faculty on their proposal.

After the workshop review, the candidate, with support from their mentor(s), then submits a 6-page proposal (1 page Specific Aims, 5 pages Research Plan) to the RL5 leaders that is reviewed with input from the OAIC Executive Committee. The OAIC review will concentrate on the feasibility of the research plan and likelihood that a grant application will emerge by the time the support has ended.

C<sup>2</sup> Award application components will include:

- A. **Candidate and Mentor(s) NIH Biosketches.**
- B. **A focused Career Development Plan:**
  1. 1 key course to develop their Gerontology knowledge (e.g. Biology of Aging, CSBL 6048) – OAIC pays tuition. This experience may also consist of participation in the Barshop Seminar series or other appropriate seminars, especially for investigators who are entering Gerontology for the first time in their careers.
  2. Responsible Conduct Training (Graduate Course MEDI 5070 or 'Spotlight' Seminars)

The candidate must make the case for how the career development program reinforces and enhances their ability to engage in the proposed research and develop their investigative capacity.

- C. **Mentor(s)' statement(s) and mentoring plan:** These must describe how the mentor(s) will guide the candidate and support the plans for moving the project into a well-constructed grant application.
- D. **Project Budget:** Appropriate expenses may include (1) Salary Support [10-20% FTE], (2) research costs [animals, supplies, institutional core utilization], and (3) tuition and fees for graduate courses (as a non-degree seeking student). The candidate and mentor(s) really have to make the case for how this support will catalyze the research and move them to a 'tipping point' where they will be able to submit a research grant.
- E. **Timeline:** The candidate must clearly outline an expected 12-month timeline for the research conduct, career development, and grant application. The expectation is that successful C<sup>2</sup> Awardees will utilize the 'Grant Seekers' program between months 6-9 of support to get feedback on their research progress, and evolving specific aims. The timeline must focus on the plan to submit a research grant (R21, R01, K, VA Career Development or other national award) by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of support.

**With the Career Catalyst (C<sup>2</sup>) Award mechanism, the San Antonio OAIC seeks to move nimbly and support new investigators as novel research opportunities emerge and evolve.**

There will be rolling submissions – prospective candidates may contact RCDC leaders at any time to initiate the process. Our goal is to have a responsive flexible support mechanism that helps new investigators obtain essential resources to submit a competitive federal grant.

**To initiate the Career Catalyst (C<sup>2</sup>) process, please contact:**

**Peter Hornsby, PhD ([Hornsby@uthscsa.edu](mailto:Hornsby@uthscsa.edu)) and**

**Al Fisher, MD, PhD ([Fishera2@uthscsa.edu](mailto:Fishera2@uthscsa.edu))**

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