Request for Pilot and Exploratory Study Proposals from the University of Florida Claude D. Pepper Older American's Independence Center focused on

Understanding the Multi-Complexity of Mobility Loss with Aging

Note: this mechanism supports pilot projects only

Release Date: August 30, 2024

Letter of Intent Deadline: November 1, 2024

Full Application Due: Friday, January 10, 2025

The University of Florida Claude D. Pepper Older American's Independence Center (OAIC) are seeking innovative, interdisciplinary Pilot and Exploratory Study (PES) applications which address research related to the OAIC theme of "Understanding the Multi-complexity of Mobility Loss with Aging". Examples may include interventions to improve mobility function, observational studies that evaluate novel risk factors for mobility loss, understanding mobility loss in under-represented groups and age-related biological and/or physiological pathways that preserve or rescue mobility function.

RFA Information Workshop:
Tuesday, September 17, 2024 from 8 – 9 AM
or Monday, October 21, 2024 from 12 – 1 PM
Clinical Translational Research Building (CTRB) Room 2144 or
via zoom https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91221268899
Link to Info Session Registration

Successful applications should collect pilot data that will lead to extramural research grants and/or career development awards.

UF OAIC Cores

Projects **MUST** utilize and appropriately budget costs to include the OAIC Cores as a research resource. A brief description of each core follows and budgetary information is available from the core leaders upon request.

The Clinical Research Core, led by Stephen Anton, Ph.D. (santon@ufl.edu) provides expertise for conducting and translating clinical research across the spectrum of investigation of both behavioral and pharmaceutical clinical trials. It also engages with observational studies of risk and outcomes related to mobility and prevention of disability.

The Metabolism and Translational Science Core, led by Christiaan Leeuwenburgh PhD (cleeuwen@ufl.edu), research asserts that healthy aging depends upon knowledge of specific protein, RNA, and DNA biomarkers, as well as measurements of metabolism in isolated mitochondria and white blood cells.

The Systems Physiology and Multi–Omics Core led by Karyn Esser, PhD (kaesser@ufl.edu) provides expertise in systemic measures of mouse activity, circadian rhythms and bioinformatics expertise for genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics and metabolomics datasets metabolism and feeding.

The Biostatistics Core, led by Peihua Qiu, PhD (pqiu@ufl.edu), creates operational definitions for outcome variables and other covariates to be measured, analyzes pilot/exploratory studies to obtain data useful for planning future studies, provides pre-study and pre-proposal study design guidance: performs power analyses, calculates appropriate sample size for testing intervention effects and develops statistical analysis plans.

The Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence Core, led by Todd Manini, PhD (tmanini@ufl.edu) and Sanjay Ranka, PhD (ranka@cise.ufl.edu), provides a central hub of expertise in computer science, biomedical engineering, biomedical informatics, data science, applied technology, epidemiology, and content expertise in the assessment of mobility.

For more information on the UF OAIC visit https://com-hop-pepper.sites.medinfo.ufl.edu/

Who should apply? What types of projects are funded? What are the evaluation criteria?

Basic science and clinical research studies are encouraged, may originate from investigators at any College within the University of Florida, and can include collaborations with other institutions, particularly those with OAIC's. PESs may be categorized as standard PESs or small PESs based on their budgets (described below). These studies may be led by early stage investigator faculty or other senior faculty new to the field of aging. US citizenship not required, foreign nationals are eligible to apply. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Significance, innovation, methodological approach, and investigator
2. Relevance to the RFA theme: "Understanding the Multi-Complexity of Mobility Loss with Aging"
3. Potential to result in subsequent larger NIH funded projects. A paragraph is required to describe the aims of the subsequent project and to outline how the PES will provide data that are needed for the major grant.
4. Multidisciplinary Investigative Team
5. Environment and use of Pepper Center Cores and Clinical Research Facilities
6. Budget and timeline appropriateness
7. Early Stage Investigator Involvement and level of mentoring offered to Early Stage Investigators

What are the budgetary allowances?

Basic science projects are allowed up to $25,000 per year and clinical research projects which involve enrollment of human subjects are allowed up to $50,000 per year in direct costs. Each project should be for no more than 2 years (project end date 3/31/2027) and it is the expectation that all funds will be expended within each award year: **no carryover of funds and no indirect costs are allowed**. Priority will be given to applications that are completed within **a shorter timeline**. Therefore, budget and timeline appropriateness are a key basis for evaluation of the application.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

1. Only direct costs that support the advancement of the research proposal are allowed. No indirect costs will be awarded.
2. Awardees must comply with the broad policies governing Cost Accounting Standards.

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO DIRECT COSTS

1. No travel costs are permitted to be budgeted on this award.
2. Scientific equipment (not to exceed $5000) is allowed if specifically budgeted for and awarded. Upon completion of the project, any equipment purchased utilizing PES funds will remain under the title of the UF Pepper Center.
3. General purpose office equipment is not allowed.
4. Costs of publications and open access fees are allowable.
5. Food is not allowed, except for research purposes for research study participants.
6. Principal Investigator and key personnel (Co-Investigators) salaries are not permitted but supporting staff scientist, pre and post-doctoral fellows and staff salaries are allowed.

Will support from other entities enhance the potential for funding?

Leveraging funding from this award by combining resources from other entities is encouraged but not required.

RFA information workshops

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 from 8-9 am or Monday, October 21, 2024 from 12 - 1pm
Info sessions will be held in person in Clinical Translational Research Building Room 2144 or by Zoom

When will applicants receive notification of award?

Notification of award is expected in **April 2025** and funds will be distributed sometime after **July 2025**. The distribution of awards is contingent upon approval of the project from the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) as appropriate. **Applicants must include the IRB/IACUC submission process in their timeline**.

What is the application process?

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

A letter of intent to submit application is due by **November 1, 2024**. The following information should be included in the submission.

1. Your name, title, email, department and college, other demographic Information.
2. Relevance to the OAIC theme as described in this RFA
3. Core(s) you plan to utilize for your project
4. Short summary, specific aims and research plan

LOIs can be submitted at https://redcap.link/xko43kow and are due by **5PM on November 1, 2024**. You will receive application instructions if your letter of intent is accepted for this RFA.

PUBLICATIONS

All publications need to follow the NIHMS guidelines. If funded, investigators will be asked to acknowledge that "**Support was provided by the University of Florida Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center P30AG028740**" and must be in PMCID compliance.

For additional information or clarification, please contact **Dr. Yenisel Cruz-Almeida** for guidance in developing relevant project proposals via e-mail: cryeni@ufl.edu.

University of Florida OAIC Pepper Pilot & Exploratory Studies Core (PESC): Opportunities & Expectations

The PESC seeks and funds innovative, interdisciplinary Pilot and Exploratory Study (PES) applications which address the focus of our UF OAIC. Successful applications will collect pilot data that will lead to extramural research grants and/or career development awards. Projects will utilize and appropriately budget costs to include the OAIC Cores as a research resource. The PESC supports pilot and exploratory studies spanning the spectrum of translational aging research (T0-T4).

The OAIC takes pride in promoting careers in the areas of Aging. Our goal is to maximize success to promote visibility of the candidates. We wish you continuing success with your career, and with this pilot project.

A. What can the Pepper Center do for Pilot Awardees?

The University of Florida PESC aims are to foster the development of research and leadership skills of promising early career scientists and those new to the aging field. The OAIC provides the following infrastructure and research support for pilot awardees:

1. Statistical consulting and data management assistance
2. Other resources from the OAIC Cores, for example assistance with recruitment of research participants, access to biomedical laboratory expertise and services
3. Support of grant development, and the opportunity to have grants reviewed internally and externally
4. Networking for aging research collaborations and mentoring at UF and nationally
5. Opportunity to present project results at UF and national research forums

B. Expectations of Pepper Center Pilot Awardees.

The following provides a list of expectations for OAIC Pilot Awardees. Appointment as a PESC awardee includes a summary of fiscal sources of support and expectations.

1. Complete progress reports & meet with PESC Leader every six months.
2. Attend at least 50% of the OAIC Seminar Series.
3. Present a one-hour presentation at the OAIC Seminar Series.
4. Attend at least 50% of the monthly OAIC Science meetings.
5. Present a one 5-minute presentation at the OAIC Pepper Executive Committee on their study. Provide progress report and financial updates every six months.
6. Provide OAIC with an updated CV annually.
7. Attend/present at National Pepper Center Annual meeting.
8. Potentially present at one monthly National Pepper Center Leadership meeting/call.
9. Participate in other UF research events as appropriate (e.g., College of Medicine Celebration of Research).
10. Initiate new collaborations & research funding proposals aligned to the UF OAIC theme.
11. Submit collaborative publications acknowledging UF OAIC support (Support was provided by the University of Florida Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center P30AG028740).
12. Peer-reviewed publications must be in PMCID compliance.