

**Request for Junior Scholar Applications from the University of
Florida Jacksonville Aging Studies Center - (JAX-ASCENT) focused
on**

Critical Illness-Related and Chronic Low-Grade Age-Related Inflammation

Release Date: June 17, 2019

Letter of Intent: October 5, 2019

Full Application Due: December 2, 2019

UF JAX-ASCENT Facility

Junior Scholars **MUST** utilize the JAX-ASCENT facility, described below.

The Jacksonville Aging Studies CENTER (JAX-ASCENT) is a state-of-the-art clinical translational research facility dedicated to aging research on the UF-JAX Campus, which officially opened in May of 2018. JAX-ASCENT focuses on racial/ethnic minority and low socio-economic status populations and was specifically created to provide an integrative physical and intellectual environment in which trainees at all levels and scientists from diverse disciplines can interact and conduct clinical and behavioral translational research on aging and independence of older adults. **This clinical research facility has dedicated interview and examination rooms for the assessments of health, physical performance measures (gait speed, balance tests, standardized daily tasks), cognition, memory, body composition and strength. Dedicated staff can also support in recruiting elderly subjects, coordinating study visits, and has access to an established “registry” to enroll these potential research participants.** JAX-ASCENT is an independent but collaborative partner site to the University of Florida’s Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) located on the University of Florida’s Gainesville campus.

Junior Scholars also have the **opportunity (but are not required)** to utilize the following existing cores at the University of Florida’s Gainesville Claude D. Pepper Center. A brief description of each core follows:

The Research Education Core, led by Christiaan Leeuwenburgh, Ph.D. recruits and supports talented Junior Scholars and provides mentored research and personalized training, including a common core of activities that increase the aptitude for translational science.

The Clinical Research Core, led by Stephen Anton, Ph.D. and Marco Pahor, M.D., provides the infrastructure and expertise for conducting clinical research on aging across the spectrum of translational investigation. The Core supports clinical research operations including participant recruitment and retention, data collection and management, as well as regulatory components.

The Metabolism and Translational Science Core, led by Christiaan Leeuwenburgh, Ph.D., quantifies biomarkers using Western blot analysis to analyze various proteins, PCR technologies (RNA), Luminex technologies to measure cytokines, and hormones to assess biological mechanisms involved in aging processes.

The Biostatistics and Data Management Core, led by Samuel Wu, Ph.D., supports study design, sample size calculations, randomization, and state-of-the-art statistical analyses of OIAC supported studies. The core also provides data coordination, including developing data collection forms, designing web based capture systems, and data management managing.

The Data Science Core, led by Todd Manini, Ph.D. and Sanjay Ranka, Ph.D., provides infrastructure, trained personnel, consultative and collaborative expertise to analyze data from electronic medical records (EMR) and to extract meaningful information from complex biomechanical and physiological data to meet the goals of the UF OAIC. The core conducts exploratory analyses of existing epidemiological and clinical trial data to support grant development and publications.

Who should apply? What are the evaluation criteria?

Clinical and basic science researchers who are junior faculty or post-doctoral associates at UF Jacksonville are encouraged to apply. Applications may originate from investigators at any College within the University of Florida's Jacksonville Campus, and can include collaborations with other institutions.

Primary Qualifications:

1. Junior faculty appointment at the Assistant Professor, Fellow, or Post-Doctoral Associate level at UF Jacksonville
2. A proposed research project relevant to **critical illness-related and chronic low-grade age-related inflammation** through interdisciplinary approaches to optimize health and/or independence in later life.
3. Commitment to a research career with an aging focus
4. Not having received as PI NIH R01 or similar grant awards
5. Sufficient protected time (at least 50%) to accomplish the research career development plan and pilot study

A letter of support from the Department Chair / Division Chief indicating the applicant will have dedicated time to complete the research project. **Selection Process:**

1. External peer review committee evaluates applicants
2. Appointment by the JAX-ASCENT Oversight Committee

Research Component

The pilot project proposed is allowed up to \$60,000 in direct costs for the 2-year funding period. Salary for the PI is up to \$60,000/year plus fringe benefits is allowable by JAX-ASCENT (see more details below). Each project should be for no more than 2 years, and it is the expectation that all funds will be expended within the two years of the award - no carryover of funds and no indirect costs are allowed. The research component is evaluated upon:

1. Significance, methodological approach, scientific merit and innovation. Applicants must have their biostatistical approach reviewed by Dr. Shiva Gautam (Shiva.Gautam@jax.ufl.edu) prior to submission.
2. Relevance to the RFA theme for JAX-ASCENT: "*Critical Illness-Related and Chronic Low-Grade Age-Related Inflammation*"
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 research will provide data that are needed for the major grant.
4. Quality and Commitment of Primary Mentor and Mentoring Team
5. Multidisciplinary Investigative Team
6. Environment and planned use of JAX-ASCENT Facility and staff
7. Budget and timeline appropriateness
8. Junior Investigator qualifications (publications, impact of research, previous training, etc).

Salary Support and Training

1. Salary of up to \$60,000/year plus fringe benefits is allowable by JAX-ASCENT
2. Salary support for JAX-ASCENT study coordinator can be negotiated with JAX-ASCENT manager and may not need to be included in budget.
3. One or two highly qualified primary mentors actively participating in their mentoring and research education components

4. Access to a formal mentoring team (3-5 members total including primary mentor (s)), including at least one member from the UF *Department of Aging and Geriatric Research* in Gainesville, with whom the applicant meets at least every six months to monitor progress
5. Applicants must clearly lay out their research education plan including attendance of all JAX-ASCENT seminars, CTSI seminars/workshop for junior faculty (all online), didactic scientific education through their research project and formal coursework as appropriate for the project.
6. Awards levels are contingent upon the type of project proposed, availability of funds and approval by the JAX-ASCENT Oversight Committee.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

1. Only direct costs that support the advancement of the proposed research project are allowed.

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO DIRECT COSTS

1. Domestic travel is permitted for project-related scientific meetings to discuss or present research. All travel expenses to be reimbursed under this contract shall be in accordance with Florida Statutes Section 112.061. Foreign travel is not allowed.
2. Scientific equipment is allowed if specifically budgeted for and awarded. Each PI department will retain title to approved equipment purchased on their portion of the awarded budget.
3. General purpose office equipment is not allowed.
4. Food is not allowed, except for research purposes for research study participants.
5. Principal Investigator and key personnel salaries are not permitted (except the Junior Scholar salary as outlined above), but supporting scientist and staff salaries are allowed.

When will applicants receive notification of award?

Notification of award is projected after **March 1, 2020**. Funds will be distributed sometime after **June 1, 2020**. 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 consider the IRB/IACUC submission process in their timeline.** Facilitation of the IRB process is encouraged by speaking directly with Dr. Kaeley (Chair, Institutional Review Board/03) regarding a specific application.

What is the application process?

Note: Please DO NOT submit any supplementary materials (e.g., appendices) as these will not be reviewed. Submit only the requested documents.

The application packet must be:

- Typed using Arial 11 font with half inch margins all around, single spaced, and with adherence to the page limitations specified. Do not delete section headings.
- Searchable: It should be created using text or word-processing software and then converted to PDF. Scanned documents cannot be processed using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and are therefore not searchable.
- Submitted in a single .pdf no larger than 4MB and named using your last name, e.g., "Johnson_OAIC_Scholar_2019"
- Failure to adhere to these formatting requirements may result in administrative withdrawal.

Application Checklist and Submission Due Date. We must receive all materials electronically by **5:00 pm on Monday, December 2, 2019** in order for your application to be considered. Please send to Jennifer Bowman (Jennifer.Bowman@jax.ufl.edu).

We will acknowledge receipt of all electronic documents by email to you.

Complete application for OAIC Pepper Scholars Program including:

- Application Face Page (1 page)
- Table of Contents (1 page)
- Candidate's CV (Full CV not NIH biosketch)
- Candidate Statement (2 pages)
- Research Plan (6 pages total:includes 1 separate page for the Aims)
- Training Plan (Complete provided table)
- Mentoring Plan (1 page for each mentor)
- Mentors' Letters, NIH Biosketches and Mentee Tables
- Chair (required) and Chief (if applicable) Letters of Support
- Example of Written Product by the Candidate
- Budget and budget justification (Use NIH Detailed Budget Template)
- Verification of Citizenship or Permanent U.S. Residence

Publications

Dissemination of the results developed under this contract are encouraged to be made publicly available and published in scholarly journals. All publications shall acknowledge that "Support was provided by The University of Florida Jacksonville Aging Studies Center - (JAX-ASCENT) R33AG056540" and must be in PMCID compliance. One copy of any manuscript submitted or accepted for publication shall be delivered to Christiaan Leeuwenburgh (cleeuwen@ufl.edu).

Junior Scholar RFA Workshop

All applicants are invited to attend an RFA preparation workshop scheduled for Monday, August 12th at 11:30am-1:00pm in the JAX-ASCENT Conference Room, Professional Office Building 2nd Floor. Those unable to attend this workshop in person can join by webinar through <https://uflphi.zoom.us/j/9042444690>, call (646) 558-8656, Meeting ID: 904 244 4690.

Questions?

Please contact Jennifer Bowman (Jennifer.Bowman@jax.ufl.edu), Christiaan Leeuwenburgh (cleeuwen@ufl.edu) or Stephen Anton (santon@ufl.edu) for questions regarding this RFA and guidance in developing relevant research proposals.