

New Jersey Alliance for Clinical and Translational Science (NJ ACTS)

2020 Career Development Award (KL2)

Scholar Program Description

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Overview

Funded by the National Institutes of Health under its Clinical and Translational Sciences Award program, the KL2 is an Institutional Career Development Award, aimed at training the next generation of scientists in research relevant to human diseases and preparing them for independent research careers. The NJ ACTS KL2 is designed to identify those **junior faculty**, regardless of degree, who are committed to academic careers and research in clinical and/or translational sciences.

The NJ ACTS Scholar Program

The KL2 will provide **up to two years** of support, which includes: 80 percent protected time for research; funds for research supplies; mentor expenses; tuition support; and professional travel. The junior faculty, referred to as Scholars, will engage in mentored research and didactic training to make them competitive for individual career development awards and provide the base for future independent research funding. The KL2 program supports Scholars in developing and conducting an outstanding translational research project at any one of the NJ ACTS partner institutions--Rutgers, Princeton University or New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT)--through strong and sustained mentoring and development of research skills through its core curriculum and electives. It provides Scholars with the opportunity to pursue an optional **Masters or Certificate in Clinical and Translational Sciences**. Participation in the program will require a **commitment of 1-3 years** beyond the two years of support from the KL2, as well as a commitment to provide follow-up information annually.

KL2 Scholars will constitute a **Society of Scholars**; the Society will include not only KL2-supported Scholars, but junior faculty, fellows or postdocs with active or recently completed Career Development Awards from Rutgers, Princeton and NJIT. In addition to providing a community, there are opportunities for peer mentoring and development of mentoring skills.

Each Scholar is expected to have a **primary research mentor** who is a member of the **NJ ACTS Academy of Mentors (see list)**, chosen for scientific achievement and track records in training/mentoring and funding.

The primary mentor does not need to be from the scholars' home institution (e.g., if research is conducted at an NJ ACTS partner institution). Scholars should include a co-mentor from their home institution. For assistance with identifying a potential lab or mentor at Princeton University, please contact Bianca Freda at email: biancaf@princeton.edu.

Mentors are expected to play an active role during the course of the award in fostering the applicant's career development as a physician scientist. Mentors are expected to act as advocates for the applicant at the departmental, institutional and professional levels and provide scientific guidance for the proposed project.

*For consideration to become a member of the Academy of Mentors send your Curriculum Vitae, NIH Biosketch including other support and List of Trainees/NIH-Table 8C to Tracey Sharp at Email: kl2njacts@rbhs.rutgers.edu.

In addition to their primary research mentor, each Scholar will have a **mentoring committee** to support their development. The Mentorship committee has adopted a matrix mentoring process that includes the Scholar, the primary research mentor, a co-mentor from the home Institution (if applicable), a mentor from the Executive Committee (EC)**, two additional mentors performing related research, the Scholar's department/division director, and relevant staff.

Scholars are expected to present their work at the NJ ACTS **Annual Retreat**.

** Primary Mentors in the Academy of Mentors are selected on the basis of the following criteria: a) alignment with the training mission; b) demonstrated excellence in investigation with an active research program in translational or clinical research; c) passion for contributing to the development of the next generation of clinical/translational scientist; d) past record of successful translational research; and e) research focus relevant to the study of scientific aspects of human diseases. Advisors are chosen based on either their clinical expertise and experience in training physicians and scientists or based on the methodological or technical expertise.*

The KL2 Scholar Award

An Institutional Career Development Award, the KL2 has the same benefits and the same requirements as individual K-awards from NIH. The award provides an initial year of support, with a second year based upon sufficient progress. The award comprises:

- 80% protected time for research
- Up to \$25,000 to defray research costs
- Up to \$10,000 to defray mentor costs
- Tuition (Justified and Approved)
- Up to \$1,250 for professional travel

Salary support will follow NIH guidelines and not exceed \$110,000/yr. Letter from Department Chair required to include a commitment for additional salary support.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the NJ ACTS Scholar Program, applicants must:

- Be a junior faculty member at Rutgers, NJIT or Princeton University
- Be a US citizen or a permanent resident of the US.
- Have received an MD, MD/PhD, PharmD, PhD or foreign equivalent degree from an accredited institution.

- Be committed to a research program in clinical and translational science, and propose a translational research project with a research question having a strong potential to impact the field.
- Not currently have or previously received a R01, P01, P50 or subproject, or a K01, K07, K08, K22, K23, K25, K76, K99/R00. Recipients of R03, R21, R34, R36, U34, X02, K30, K12 and KL2 funding remain eligible.

Additional requirements:

- PhD Scholars currently completing postdoctoral fellowships and transitioning to a faculty position at a NJ ACTS institution (appointment on or before July 1, 2021), who have a research portfolio with expertise in research that would allow them to perform translational research with a strong focus on human disease.
- No more than 5 years of postdoctoral research experience, and no more than 10 years since receiving the terminal doctoral degree.
- Scholars who are physicians will have clinical responsibilities, which will account for no more than 20% of their effort during the term of the grant.
- Be guaranteed a minimum overall research time protection of 80 percent of full-time professional effort by the applicant's institution if an award is made. This protection ensures that the applicant develops skills and knowledge necessary for a career in biomedical research.

We strongly encourage applications from women and those from groups that are underrepresented in medicine, including Blacks or African Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and those from individuals with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds.

We also encourage applications that demonstrate collaborative translational research across NJ ACTS institutions.

The Application Process

The **Application Process** requires completion of the application (see below) and interviews with the Scholar Program Executive Committee and members of the Academy of Mentors.

A complete application comprises:

- The Application Form.
- 3 Letters of Reference **submitted directly to the Program.** -- Referees are required to send letters to the Program Administrator, Tracey Sharp at Email: kl2njacts@rbhs.rutgers.edu.
- A Career Development proposal, following the Instructions in the document entitled "Proposal Guidance and Requirements". This includes: Candidate Information and Goals for Career Development (2 pages); Research Strategy (5 pages); Mentor Commitment and Plans; Department Chair Approval and Commitment, ensuring that 80% of your research time will be protected if the award is made; Regulatory Approvals (as applicable); and NIH Biosketch (Include (1) candidate biosketch as well as (2) primary mentor biosketch including other support).
- School commitment, ensuring that 80% of your research time will be protected if the award is made.
- Salary support will follow NIH guidelines and not exceed \$110,000/yr. Provide a letter from Department Chair to include a commitment for additional salary support.

Complete applications must be submitted as a single electronic PDF package to: Program Administrator at Email: kl2njacts@rbhs.rutgers.edu

NJIT applicants: Applications must go through the normal proposal preparation and submission protocols (Including adhering to the NJIT proposal timeline and guidelines requirements by working with your assigned College director and using Streamlyne for internal documentation and approvals for budget and compliance checks) prior to submission to the Program Administrator.

Princeton applicants: Applications should be coordinated through your grants manager and routed in COEUS for approval prior to submission to the Program Administrator. For questions about award provisions or other inquiries, please contact Bianca Freda at biancaf@princeton.edu.

Rutgers applicants: These are internal applications. Therefore, the RAPSS is not a required component prior to submission to the Program Administrator. For questions about award provisions or other inquiries, please contact Tracey Sharp at kl2njacts@rbhs.rutgers.edu

Key Dates:

- Applications due: **November 2, 2020, 3 p.m.**
- Interviews: December, 2020
- Notification of Awards: January, 2021
- Award Start Date: July 1, 2021

Selection Process

Upon review of the applications, the strongest candidates will be contacted and invited to **interview** with four-six faculty members of the Academy Mentors, including the EC and current Scholars.

The EC will make the final selection based upon written evaluations from each interviewing faculty member, as well as the strength of the application. Review criteria of the research plan, consistent with NIH criteria, will include:

- Significance:
 - Importance of the problem and likelihood that the research will impact the career advancement of the applicant.
- Originality:
 - Originality of the research proposal to address a clinically meaningful research question.
- Approach:
 - Appropriateness of the methodology and scope of the project.
- Investigator:
 - Evidence of the applicant's commitment to a clinical/translational research career and promise to make significant contributions to the field. Demonstration of the applicant's inventiveness and talent. Potential of the Scholar to have a successful career in translational research.
- Environment and Mentorship:
 - The quality of the research training environment and commitment of the applicant's department and institution to the applicant. Evidence of institutional and mentor commitment to facilitate access to key resources. Evidence of the mentor's successful research career. Potential of the mentor to support the applicant and offer outstanding

research and career guidance. Fit of the proposed partnership between applicant and mentor. Evidence of both parties' commitment. Quality of the mentoring plan and proposed structure of the mentorship.

Other Requirements

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals are not necessary at the time of application. However, it is strongly preferred that IRB and/or IACUC approvals to be in place prior to the award start date. IRB or IACUC approval must be in place **prior to award start date**. The proposals must also be approved by a separate NIH panel.
- If applicable, Investigational New Drug Approvals must be in place by the deadline for submission of a full proposal.

Scholar Training

We have developed tailored learning opportunities for Scholars in the T0-T4 CTS continuum and provide diverse programmatic opportunities to include competency-based, individualized development plans with an emphasis on interdisciplinary professional skill training. These will include novel online (on-demand) coursework and community engagement opportunities. Learning in this field is often through and by experience, hence the Scholars will develop a clinical and translational research question, design a study and use biomedical informatics.

- Each Scholar will develop an **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** to guide training and acquisition of translational science knowledge and skills. The IDPs will include a research question, hypothesis, study design and approach and a narrative statement of longer-term career aspirations.
- Scholars will also participate in a **Core Curriculum** as well as an elective curriculum comprised of courses appropriate to their research and level of training. Training plans include required and elective didactic programs, NJACTS-sponsored seminars/workshops, and other career development programs.
- A required didactic **Core Curriculum** is based on core competencies: 1) Teaching; 2) Collaboration and Interpersonal Communication; 3) Writing; 4) Research and Academic Skills; 5) Presentation; 6) Leadership and Mentorship; 7) Time-Management and Personal Development; 8) Career and Professional Development has been established. We anticipate that this **Core and Elective curriculum** will require 5-10% of the Scholar's time during the 2-year training period. Each Scholar, in conjunction with their Mentorship Committee, will determine an elective curriculum.
- Scholars can avail themselves of the resources of the NJ ACTS Core Facilities, and the Program will be an introduction to the capabilities and services of each Core Facility.
- Opportunity to pursue an optional **Masters or Certificate in Clinical and Translational Sciences**.
- Finally, as a capstone of the mentored training, the Scholars will prepare **application(s) for independent funding** or for additional **mentored career development**.

Scholar Evaluation

Scholar evaluation and feedback is an important component of the Program and is intended to

provide positive and actionable feedback to the Scholar. Specific components include:

- The Mentorship Committee will monitor research and career progress quarterly.
- The Scholar will submit a brief written progress report of their accomplishments biannually.
- The Chair of the Scholar's Mentorship Committee will prepare a biannual written evaluation for submission to the EC.
- Concluding presentation. Eighteen to twenty months after starting the research training, scholars will discuss their research achievements in a formal oral presentation to the Mentorship Committee and EC. This presentation will enable the Committee to judge the success of the Scholar's progress and will provide the Scholar with an opportunity to prepare for a formal presentation of work at the Scholar's forum at the NJ ACTS Annual Research Day.
- A formal review of the Scholar will be performed and reviewed by the EC. Matriculation to the second year of the program will be contingent on:
 - Completion of the first year of the core curriculum.
 - Successful initial and interim presentations.
 - Satisfactory written evaluation by the Chair of the Scholar's Mentorship Committee.
 - Progress in, or concrete plans for preparation, of an application for additional mentored career development.

Meet Our Current Scholars

Qiana Brown, PhD, MPH, LCSW

Assistant Professor

Rutgers University School of Social Work and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences School of Public Health

Mentor: Stephen Crystal, PhD, Board of Governors Professor

Rutgers University School of Social Work

Project: *Cannabis use during preconception, pregnancy and lactation*

"The protected time to conduct research and networking opportunities are invaluable in this early stage of my career."

Chintan Dave, PharmD, PhD

Assistant Professor

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, Ernest Mario College of Pharmacy

Mentor: Soko Setoguchi, MD, DrPH, Associate Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences School of Public Health

Project: *Hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia associated with drugs used by older adults for diabetes*

"The resulting research and manuscripts from the KL2 will serve as the foundation to future R01 awards."

Elissa Kozlov, PhD

Core Faculty

Rutgers Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research; Instructor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences School of Public Health

Mentor: Xinqi Dong, MD, MPH, Director and Professor, Rutgers Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research

Project: Health mindfulness to alleviate stress for caregivers of cognitively impaired older adults

“This grant has helped me meet new collaborators, which resulted in publications in new research areas and allowed me to collect pilot data for larger grant submissions.”

Ankit Shah, MD

Assistant Professor

Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Mentor: Fredric Wondisford, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Project: Glycerol contribution to hepatic gluconeogenesis in obesity

“The KL2 program allowed me to decrease my clinical responsibilities and focus on obtaining formal research training, conducting translational research, and submitting manuscripts and grants.”

Program Administrator: Ms. Tracey Sharp

Email: kl2njacts@rbhs.rutgers.edu

**Executive Committee (EC) includes the KL2 PI and training directors

KL2 Academy of Mentors*:***Please note: The KL2 Academy includes most but not all members of the TL1 Academy**

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