



THE CMBB QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Another summer has come and gone and we hope you all had a chance to enjoy a vacation, relax and rejuvenate for the rest of the year. We are now into a new fiscal year and we know it is going to be just as busy and productive as last year was.

MINORITY INSTITUTION/CANCER CENTER PROGRAM APPLICATIONS ARRIVE

In response to the three RFAs (P20, U56, U54) issued for the Minority Institution/Cancer Center Program, 18 of the 61 NCI-designated Cancer Centers, one non-NCI Cancer Center and 18 Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) submitted partnership applications that are focused on addressing cancer disparities in minority populations. Fifteen P20, four U56, and two U54 applications were submitted for the July 26, 2000 receipt date, and they will be reviewed by an NCI Special Review Committee in the first week of December, 2000. **Other MSIs and Cancer Centers are encouraged to apply in the next round with a receipt date of July 26, 2001.**

In addition to the scientific meetings and site visits already made this year, members of our staff will be attending and participating in more minority meetings before this year ends; the SACNAS meeting in October, the RCMI International Symposium on Health Disparities

in November, and the National Minority Symposium, also in November.

All in all, it has been an exciting, productive start to the new millennium. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support and kind words over the past year and we hope to continue doing what we've been doing - only better!

THE CMBB BULLETIN BOARD

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go to **Dr. Kimlin Ashing**, University of California, Los Angeles. She was recently awarded a California Cancer Research Grant to study QOL among Cervical Cancer Survivors.

Dr. Kolawole Okuyemi, one of our Minority Investigator Supplement recipients advises us that he received a grant from the Cancer Research Foundation of America to conduct a study titled "Understanding Light Smoking in African Americans.

And congratulations to **Dr. Jasjit Ahluwalia**, one of our wonderful mentors, who has been selected to serve as a reviewer for SNEM-1,

one of the study sections in the Social Sciences, Nursing, Epidemiology and Methods (SNEM) Integrated Review Group at the Center for Scientific Review at NIH, and also on becoming a new father.

Familiar Faces Close Medical Gap: Caring About Culture Helps Minorities. That is the title of an article by Anita Manning in the September 5, 200 issue of USA Today, which features a very nice interview with **Dr. Eric Bailey**, Program Director, CMBB. Congratulations, Eric. The article was most interesting and informative.

FEEDBACK

The following are excerpts from the many letters we recently received:

From **Dr. Kimberly Jackson**, and we thank her for her kind words.

"I am honored to have received the MIS award and wish to thank the members of NCI and CMBB for the opportunities this award has afforded me. It has provided me with the financial support and flexibility needed for the transition to become a strong independent researcher. In the short time that I was awarded this supplement, I have been able to attend and present my work at several conferences and workshops, such as the AACR National conference, AACR Pathobiology of Cancer Summer Workshop, a Mentoring and Peer Review Workshop sponsored by yourbranch and a Minority Training Research Forum. I have also been able to make the necessary contacts needed for my survival as a professional in this competitive field of science."

From **Dr. William Y. Boadi**, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Tennessee State University.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, the organization and for selecting me as a recipient of the 2000 AACR HBCU Faculty Scholar Award in Cancer Research. It would not have been possible for me to attend such an important meeting without the award!

I also like to mention that all the events organized for the award were very encouraging, successful and afforded me the opportunity to share my experience and to discuss some

academic problems with my colleagues during the meeting. I had the opportunity to meet with other scientists to discuss possible collaborations in the near future. I hope to share my experience with my peers here in my institution."

From **Dr. Alice B. Brown**, Massachusetts General Hospital, comes the following:

"I would like to thank you for inviting me to attend the Peer Review and Mentoring Workshop recently held in Gaithersburg, Maryland. This was the first one I attended and I have not stopped talking about it since I got back! Those four days were really an eye-opener for me. I cannot remember a more meaningful experience. My positive comments have already spurred an undergraduate student and a postdoctoral fellow to seek a Minority Supplement from their respective Institutes to help them get solid financial footing within a laboratory.

The information you presented helped me to discuss options with her that she had never know existed.

That's what I think was really great about the workshop. The mentoring discussions had a great impact and were 'intangibles' that must really be experienced and not 'downloaded from the web' like so much in our professional lives. It struck me as I was sitting there that we are all mentors, whether we realize it or not. Learning what to expect (encourage? demand? encourage and demand?) from my mentor helped me to see what was needed in my relationship with my research technician, a recent college graduate who is still trying to sort out what she wants to do with her life. Oh, yes, peer mentoring is alive and well within my laboratory...everyone seems energized by my experiences and there is quite a bit of momentum going now. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity."

From **Dr. Maria Cardenas**, one of our K01 grantees located at the Duke University Medical Center.

"I have received the wonderful news about the renewal of my grant for the upcoming year. This means a lot, if not everything, to my research program and my collaborators and I am indebted to you and the NCI. Thank you!

Meanwhile, I am now preparing my R01 application which I will be submitting this October. I remember that you have mentioned at some point to inform you when we will be doing this. We have continued our work employing the immunosuppressant rapamycin as a tool to dissect the cellular functions of its molecular targets, the TOR protein kinases which are highly conserved from yeast to humans. Rapamycin has just been approved as an immunosuppressive drug by the FDA. In addition, rapamycin exhibits a potent antitumor activity and clinical trials in cancer patients are underway in USA and Europe for its use in chemotherapy. We have been major contributors to this research field and have competed successfully with other groups from Harvard University, Princeton, UCSF, and abroad from Japan and Switzerland. Our efforts have resulted in 16 publications and 3 more in review, for the total grant period of 9/30/97 to present. Our studies with yeast as a model system have uncovered a signal transduction pathway; that in response to nutrients or mitogens regulates cell growth, proliferation, and differentiation in both yeast and humans. With the human genome project close to completion, studies with genetically tractable organisms, such as yeast, are proving to be a highly powerful tool to elucidate the function of human genes many of which, as the TOR genes, have been conserved from yeast to humans over a billion years of evolution. Indeed, the TOR genes were first discovered in yeast by one of my Duke collaborators and ever since the yeast system has guided the studies with human cells.

On the personal side, during the period of this grant I have been promoted from assistant to associate research professor and I consider it a great honor to be introduced in the roster of my department on a separate web page as an independent investigator."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Here are a couple of first impressions from two of our K01 recipients that had the opportunity to participate as *ad hoc* reviewers on the Manpower and Training Review Committee as part of the K01 peer review experience.

"I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the NCI Manpower and Training review session this past June. The experience was invaluable. Nothing can replace the ability

of seeing the real thing. Observing scientists committing their time to assure fairness of the process takes the faith I had in the system to a new level. In addition, it helped me understand the importance of a well organized and presented application." Signed, **Miguel Villalona**, (Ohio State University).

"Back from Washington D.C. I would like to thank you for enabling us (KO1 Mentored Career Development Awardees) to participate as *ad hoc* reviewers for the Manpower and Training Review Subcommittee of the NCI. This was a great opportunity for understanding some of the numerous factors involved in the funding of a training grant application from the performance of the finest researchers-reviewers. I am now able to appreciate how crucial are the smallest decisions made since the early stages of career development.

In regard to your request for my first impressions: It surprised me how the score of an outstanding candidate, who recently published in the journal Science, suffered by the less than outstanding working environment. Inversely, a less qualified candidate benefitted under a mentor with a worldwide outstanding reputation in an equally highly qualified institution. Candidates with that type of advantages were able to receive better scores despite few publications in average journals. The expectations on the project were also significant as shown by the application that received a lower score in spite of the outstanding mentor and institution because of poor description of the statistical methods and proposal to use an old-fashioned technical procedure.

Succinctly, for both KO8 and KO1 awards, in addition to the scientific merit of the project, the following factors played a crucial role on the final outcome of the application: 1) the reputation of the mentor, institution and consultants, 2) the quality and number of publications (top journals), 3) the translational potential of the project, 4) the level of enthusiasm of the letters of recommendation, 5) the degree of institutional commitment to the career development of the candidate, 6) the presentation of the project (clarity, grammar, spelling), and 7) the career development plan of the candidate. Undoubtedly an outstanding and generous mentor would set in motion the other factors mainly the scientific merit of the application.

In the end, it staggered me to see how vulnerable we scientists are and how our lives depend on the excellence, integrity and wisdom of the primary and secondary reviewers, yet the system is quite fair. During my flight back I wondered if the expectations for a Ph.D. to qualify for a training grant were somewhat excessive. I then tried to imagine how we, the human race devastated by cancer, can afford to turn down so many outstanding and excellent candidates (it was estimated that about 33% of the applications would be funded) particularly considering the relatively low number of applications (about 39 KO8 and 19 KO1 applications).

How wonderful to have had this opportunity and how much of a better job I think I can do this week.

Thank you again. **Cecilia.**” (**Cecilia Whitacre**, Case Western Reserve University)

SUGGESTION BOX

The following suggestion was received from **Okot Nyormoi**, one of our Mentored Career Development Awardees.

“It will be helpful for prospective K01 applicants to go through the process of preparing their application first. Otherwise, they may just use the old application as a template and then fill in the blank with their own words and project. In a way, the instructions in the application package provides that framework. However, if they do not first go through it themselves, they will not gain the experience of following instructions and the various decisions they have to make in the course of preparing the application. We should apply the same principle we use for doing the mock review. We first do the review ourselves before we are informed of the original reviews. Otherwise, the tendency to just copy what the previous reviewers say is high.

If I may, let me suggest that we encourage potential candidates who ask to see old funded applications to first prepare their applications as best as possible and then after they have done so, they can see old applications or discuss their applications with those whose applications have been funded. This way, they will learn about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications based on their own efforts.

The other reason (not a major one) why I prefer

that potential applicants do not see a previously funded application is that some non-funded applicants will claim that the qualities of their applications are the same as those of previously funded applications that they have seen. It will save you the trouble of having to explain why if they do not have the opportunity to make that type of comparison. However, if you do not mind doing that, I have no serious objection showing any potential applicant my funded application.”

CMBB RESPONSE

Once a draft K01 application has been prepared, it will be sent to current K-recipients for pre-review and comments. After receiving comments from the pre-reviewer, the applicant can then request the funded grant from the PI.

Of course, we will continue to pre-review all potential K applications at our annual Mock Study Section.

NEW TRAINING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Dr. Lee Limbird, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, **Vanderbilt University Medical Center** recently let us know about two career mentoring programs for faculty that are available at Vanderbilt. One, the Vanderbilt Physicians Scientists Development program (VPSD), is designed to provide an enriching scientific environment and salary support to allow newly appointed Assistant Professor physicians to receive mentored investigative training. The program will provide \$75,000 per year in salary support to allow 6-7 new Assistant Professors in clinical departments to join the research programs of established investigators throughout the institution. There are no restrictions on the departmental affiliation of either the applicant or the mentor, and trans-departmental relationships are strongly encouraged.

For more information about this program, contact:

Dr. Jeffrey R. Balsler, c/o Mrs. Kelen Taylor, Administrator, VPSD Awards Program, Room 560, MRBII, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN 37232; Phone: 615-936-0277; Fax: 615-936-0456; e-mail: Jeff.Balsler@mcmail.vanderbilt.edu.

The second program is the Master of Science in

Clinical Investigation Program, created in response to the need for investigators trained in the techniques and processes utilized in patient-oriented research. This program is intended to provide direct, mentored experience in clinical investigation and, through didactic work, to provide trainees with a strong foundation in study design, biostatistics, biomedical ethics, clinical pharmacology, human genetics and assay methods. It is expected that graduates of this program will compete successfully for grants such as the K23, K08, and R01.

For more information about this program contact **Dr. Nancy J. Brown or Dr. Thomas A. Hazinski, Master of Science in Clinical Investigation Program, S-3126A Medical Center North, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, TN 37232-2195; phone 615-322-3480; Fax 615-322-4016; e-mail susan.britt@mcm.vanderbilt.edu.**

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The **CMBB** will be recruiting, in the near future, for a Program Director position with primary responsibility for managing the Minority Institution/Cancer Center Program. Minimum requirements are a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree and experience as an established investigator, excellent oral and written communication skills and experience/interest in minority research, training, education and outreach activities.

Individuals interested in applying are encouraged to call **Dr. Sanya Springfield at 301-496-7344 or e-mail her at ss165i@nih.gov for more information.**

The University of Massachusetts Cancer Center at the University of Massachusetts Medical School is expanding initiatives in several key areas of cancer research and is recruiting for several tenure track faculty positions in molecular and genetic epidemiology.

Applicants should have interest and accomplishments in population-based research on (1) biomarkers of genetic susceptibility, carcinogenic exposure and mechanisms, and intermediate end points, or (2) genetic determinants of human cancer and gene-environment interactions.

Applicants should send a curriculum vitae, a succinct statement of research accomplishments and future research plans, along with the names of three individuals who can be contacted for recommendations to:

Chung-Cheng Hsieh, Sc.D., Deputy Director of Cancer Prevention and Control, University of Massachusetts Medical School,, 373 Plantation Street, Worcester, MA 01605

The Department of Preventive Medicine, University of Kansas Medical Center, a dynamic, multidisciplinary group of 23 faculty, has an immediate opening for a tenure track faculty member in the area of nutrition, obesity and/or physical activity. The candidate should have a doctoral degree in epidemiology, social/behavioral sciences, nutrition, health education, or psychology, and have experience in collaborative extramurally funded research, publications, and teaching. Join a growing team of federally funded researchers working in a number of areas such as cardiovascular disease prevention, breast cancer, smoking cessation, substance abuse, and outcomes research.

Excellent collaborative research opportunities, and joint appointments, exist with the Center on Aging, The Kansas Cancer Institute, a newly created Center for Health Care Research, the Department of Health Policy and Management, and the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition. The primary responsibility will be to build an active program of research in this thematic area. The faculty member will also teach in the department's innovative statewide, Master of Public Health Program.

Send a cover letter, CV and three references to:

**Jasjit S. Ahluwalia, MD, MPH, MS
Chair, Behavioral Scientist Search
Committee**

**University of Kansas Medical Center
Department of Preventive Medicine
3901 Rainbow Boulevard
Kansas City, KS 66160-7313
913-588-2772**

**SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM DIRECTOR IN
PSYCHOSOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, HEALTH
POLICY AND HEALTH SERVICES
RESEARCH**

The American Cancer Society is expanding the scope of its grants program in Psychosocial, behavioral, health policy and health services

research, and is seeking a Scientific Program Director to lead this effort in the Extramural Grants Department at the Society's National Home Office in Atlanta, Georgia.

The overall responsibility of this position is to assure unbiased, rigorous, peer review of grant applications. In addition, the Program Director will serve as an expert source of information on advances in the above fields of cancer research and advise about promising future areas of investigation in his or her specific area of expertise. He or she will also play a major role in promoting the American Cancer Society's Research Program, and in that capacity will be called upon to address professional and lay audiences. Although the position is largely administrative, there are opportunities to participate in collaborative projects throughout the Society, in particular with the intramural Behavioral Research Center.

Minimum requirements are a PhD, MD, or equivalent degree, and five years experience as an established and well-published investigator in the Psychosocial, behavioral, health policy or health services research peer reviewed literature. Excellent oral and written communication skills are essential. The position reports to the Vice President for Extramural Grants. Salary is competitive and commensurate with the candidate's qualifications and experience.

Please send your CV, the names of three references, and an indication of salary requirements to:

John Stevens, MD
Vice President for Extramural Grants
American Cancer Society
Research Department
1599 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

The Bureau of Primary Health Care of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is expanding their cancer research efforts. They wish to fill a position with someone who has interest and experience in health services or epidemiological research on vulnerable populations. A considerable portion of this position will be devoted to cancer control research and service evaluation (for example, assessing stage at

diagnosis and survival of patients in large-scale programs). Most of the research is intramural. The position is located in the Special Populations Research Branch, Division of Programs for Special Populations. The division targets a number of high risk populations, such as the homeless, aging, migrant, immigrant, Native Hawaiian, and residents of public housing. To discuss details of the position, contact **Barbara Wells at 301-594-4463 or bwells@hrsa.gov**.

New York City-based M.D. or Ph.D. junior investigators are need to work with the **NY Preventive Care Manager Project (Dartmouth)**, which will identify barriers to receiving indicated cancer early detection services faced by ethnically diverse women aged 50-69 years seen in Federally Qualified Health Centers in New York City. With this understanding, Prevention Care Managers will assist these women to overcome the barriers they face in a randomized controlled trial involving four health centers.

For more information, contact:
Allen.J.Dietrich@Dartmouth.edu

