Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (THRIV):

THRV Scholar Career Development Awards

Date: November 27, 2017

The Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (THRIV) is a transformational cross-grounds collaboration that leverages the latest advances in data science to accelerate innovation in health-related research and facilitate team science. THRIV seeks to support highly qualified junior faculty for activities related to the development of a successful clinical research or translational research career.

The THRIV Scholar Career Development Program aims to train the next generation of translational researchers in principles of data science, the conduct of rigorous and reproducible science, and to promote team science as a means to enhance innovation and discovery in health-related research. THRIV announces the annual call for applications for this mentored career development award. Proposals that demonstrate potential to integrate team science and data science in clinical or translational research are preferred.

Type and amount of funding:

- 50%-75% salary/fringe support (total up to $120,000/year) for up to 2 consecutive years
- $50,000/year in research-related expenses including supplies, Scholar travel, Scholar training and/or tuition, etc. for each year of the award

Eligibility:

- Applicants must have a research or health-professional doctoral degree (or its equivalent), including but not limited to M.D., D.O., and/or Ph.D.
- Applicants must have a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Virginia at the time of the award; the position cannot be contingent on obtaining this award. (Faculty holding at least a 9-month appointment are eligible)
- Applicants must be a U.S. citizen or non-citizen national, or have documented permanent resident status.
- Applicants must commit 75% effort to mentored research and career development activities; surgical applicants are required to commit at least 50% effort for these activities (subject to approval during the application process). A letter of support from the applicant’s department chair must include a statement of commitment to 75% protected time (or 50% as applicable for surgeons in surgical specialties) and a clear description of other activities (including the percent effort allocated to clinical responsibilities, on-call time, teaching, service, and/or administrative activities).
- Applicants who have previously received a career development award or a national independent research award (as PI) covering more than 2 full calendar months of support in a year (e.g. NSF, NIH, AHA, etc) are NOT eligible.
- Applicants must identify at least one scientific mentor; the primary scientific mentor must provide a letter of support of the application. More than one scientific mentor is permitted and encouraged as appropriate for the proposal.
**Program description:**

The THRIV Scholar Career Development Program aims to train the next generation of clinical and translational researchers in principles of data science, the conduct of rigorous and reproducible science, and to promote team science as a means to enhance innovation and discovery. Up to five Scholars are selected annually to participate in the program; junior faculty candidates pursuing a career in clinical research or translational research from all departments and Schools at the University of Virginia are encouraged to apply. Members of under-represented racial and ethnic groups and candidates with disabilities are also encouraged to apply.

In anticipation of a diverse cohort of Scholars, representing a mix of backgrounds, prior training, and research focus, the program is based in a common curriculum of clinical and translational research competencies, interwoven with data science principles, and professional development activities. Each Scholar will furthermore enhance the skills specific to their research and career development through an individualized learning plan.

Individualized training will be accomplished through various methods including:

1) The composition of a personal mentorship team, including the addition of THRIV-appointed career development mentors to the scientific mentor(s) previously identified by the applicant. Applicants are encouraged to list up to three additional areas of expertise (or individual faculty members) that would be welcome contributions to the proposed project or augment the applicant’s career development plan.

2) Translational experiences, which are individually selected to broaden the Scholars’ perspective and ability to communicate with stakeholders outside of their immediate scientific field. Immersive externships allow for skill acquisition or relationship development that could advance the Scholar’s research and extend his/her developmental network. Externship experiences could include serving as an adjunct member of a community advisory board, participating within a team of scientists at the Data Science Institute, or an experience within a regulatory or policy-related organization at the state or national level.

3) Individual coaching to achieve professional development goals.

4) Opportunities for individualized course work (e.g. Masters of Data Science, Masters of Science in Clinical Investigation, etc.).

THRIV has partnered with the UVA Data Science Institute to provide training in research informatics, data analysis and visualization, prediction modeling, open data resources and data sharing, as well as the ethics and governance of big data. In partnering with the Center for Open Science (https://cos.io/), THRIV also is committed to the promotion of scientific rigor and reproducibility, and encourages applicants to consider the use of tools from the Center for Open Science to enhance the reproducibility of their work.

During the award period, Scholars are expected to pursue an extramural mentored career development award and/or independent research funding; if funding is not achieved within the 2 year award period, the applicant’s home department or school must guarantee a funded 3rd year of 75% (or 50% for approved surgeons in surgical specialties) protected time to achieve extramural funding. A letter of support from the applicant’s department chair confirming this commitment is required at the time of application. If a national career development award or major independent research grant is funded before the end of the THRIV award, the Scholar may continue to participate in THRIV Scholar programming (at their discretion) but support will
transition to the extramural award (as allowed by the external award). An annual progress report is required of all Scholars.

This program will not support any applicants with a focus on global health and/or research located outside of the United States. This program will not fund any research work or travel outside of the United States and Canada. Conducting research in the United States with foreign samples and data is allowed.

The THRIV Scholar Career Development Program encourages applications with an emphasis on interdisciplinary team science. Proposals that incorporate, or have the potential to integrate, data science methods are preferred, and demonstration of the research program’s potential in using data to improve health is encouraged.

**Instructions for Proposal:**

A complete application must include:

- NIH Biosketch and other support for the applicant
- NIH Biosketch and other support for the applicant’s scientific mentor(s)
- NIH Biosketches for key contributors to the applicant’s proposed research
- Proposal
  - Career Development Plan (6 page limit)
    - Describe applicant background
    - Career goals and objectives
    - Mentoring plan and proposed career development activities
  - Specific Aims (research question(s)) (1 page)
  - Research strategy (6 page limit)
    - Include plan to assure scientific rigor and reproducibility (applicants may wish to consider resources offered by the Center for Open Science (https://cos.io/))
  - References cited
  - List up to three additional areas of expertise (or individual faculty members) that would be welcome contributions to the proposed project or augment the applicant’s career development plan.
- Budget and Budget Justification
- Letters of support (6 page limit total for all letters)
  - Department chair (required)
  - Primary scientific mentor (required)
  - Consultants, Contributors (as appropriate)
- Description of Institutional environment and commitment (1 page)
- Protections for Human Subjects (state N/A if not appropriate)
- Inclusion of women, minorities and children (state N/A if not appropriate)
- Vertebrate animals (state N/A if not appropriate)
- Training in the responsible conduct of research (1 page)
- Biohazards (state N/A if not appropriate)
Applications should be sent electronically to Jennifer Kirkham at jhk3s@virginia.edu on or before March 1, 2018. Letters of Intent are strongly preferred and should be electronically submitted by February 1, 2018 to Jennifer Kirkham. Please include the title of the proposal and name(s) of scientific mentor(s) in the Letter of Intent.

**Key Dates:**

Call for applications: November 27, 2017
Letter of Intent Due: February 1, 2018 (optional but strongly preferred)
Applications Due: March 1, 2018
Notification of Awards: By June 1, 2018
Award Begins: July 1, 2018

**Dates subject to change at the discretion of the Program Leadership.**

**Selection Criteria:**

NIH Scoring criteria will be used to evaluate submitted proposals. Each of the following areas will be scored using the NIH nine-point scale:

- Overall impact
- Candidate
- Career development plan/career goals & objectives/plan to provide mentoring
- Research plan
- Mentors/consultants/collaborators
- Environment and institutional commitment to the applicant
- Additional Review Criteria:
  - Protections for Human Subjects
  - Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children (for human subjects research)
  - Vertebrate Animals
  - Biohazards
  - Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research
  - Potential for Integration of Data Science and Team Science Principles
  - Approach to Scientific Rigor and Reproducibility

Evaluations will be returned to applicants with the intent of providing feedback that will be helpful for all applicants (whether or not the proposal is funded) for future competitive proposals.

**Support for Applicants:**

For questions regarding the mentored career development award, please contact Sandra Burks in the THRIV office at 434-924-9061 or email sgb2c@virginia.edu.

References for proposal content and selection criteria:
1. NIH Biosketch format, template: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm