



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: September 1, 2023**

**Letter of Intent Due: September 29, 2023**

**Full Application Due: January 12, 2024**

The University of Florida Claude D. Pepper Older American's Independence Center (OAIC), Directors Karyn Esser and Todd Manini, 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 new risk factors for mobility loss, understanding mobility loss in under-represented groups and age-related biological/physiological pathways that preserve or rescue mobility function.

**RFA Informational Workshop:**

**September 15, 2023 from 8-9 AM**

**In person in CTRB 3161 or via zoom <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/9816351466>**

Register by emailing: [info-aging@aging.ufl.edu](mailto:info-aging@aging.ufl.edu)

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 **letter of support** is required from the involved core leader and should be included in the application. 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, PhD provides the infrastructure and expertise for conducting clinical research across the spectrum of translational investigation.

**The Metabolism and Translational Science Core**, led by Christiaan Leeuwenburgh PhD in collaboration with all other Cores, utilizes translational research to determine specific biological mechanisms of functional decline in elderly populations and in pre-clinical animal models of aging.

**The Systems Physiology and Multi-Omics Resource Core** led by Karyn Esser, PhD provides preclinical resources for cage activity, feeding behavior and non-terminal sleep assessments with outcomes measures. Technical and informatics support for -Omics and circadian statistics for preclinical and clinical samples.

**The Biostatistics Core**, led by Peihua Qiu, PhD, supports study design, sample size calculations, randomization, and state-of-the-art statistical analyses of OAIC supported studies. The core also provides data coordination, including developing data collection forms, designing web-based capture systems, and data management.

**The Data Science and Applied Technology Core**, led by Todd Manini, PhD and Sanjay Ranka, PhD, 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.

For more information on the UF OAIC visit [www.aging.ufl.edu](http://www.aging.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 faculty and/or research associates receiving OAIC Research Education Core (REC) support, or by other senior or early stage investigators. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Significance, methodological approach, scientific merit and innovation
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 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. Smaller PESs are allowed with a budget of < \$10,000 per year for one year.

Awards levels are contingent upon the type of project proposed, availability of funds and approval by the OAIC

External Advisory Board and the National Institute on Aging.

### **ALLOWABLE COSTS**

1. Only direct costs that support the advancement of the Statement of Work are allowed.
2. Funds awarded may not be used for indirect costs.
3. Awardees must comply with the broad policies governing Cost Accounting Standards.

### **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 award 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 but supporting scientist 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.

### **When will applicants receive notification of award?**

Notification of award is projected after **March 2024** and funds will be distributed sometime after **July 2024**. 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.** Facilitation of the IRB process is encouraged by speaking directly with Dr. Iafrate regarding a specific application. For IACUC approval, prior consultation with an ACS veterinarian is strongly encouraged.

### **What is the application process?**

#### **LETTER OF INTENT**

A letter of intent to submit application is due by **September 29, 2023**. The following items should be included in the letter.

1. Your name, title, email, department and college
2. Relevance to the OAIC theme described in this RFA
3. List of Core or Core's you will utilize for your project
4. Short summary and specific aims

Submit letter of intent by email to [info-aging@aging.ufl.edu](mailto:info-aging@aging.ufl.edu) by 5PM on the due date. You will receive application instructions if your letter of intent is accepted for this RFA.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

Dissemination of the results developed under this award 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 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](mailto: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% the OAIC Seminar Series.
3. Present a one-hour presentation at the OAIC Seminar Series.
4. Attend at least 50% of the monthly OAIC Pepper Executive Committee meetings.
5. Present a one 5-minute presentation at the OAIC Pepper Executive Committee on their study. Provide a quarterly progress report and financial updates.
6. Provide OAIC with an updated CV annually.
7. Attend/present at National Pepper Center Annual meeting.
8. Potentially present at one 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.