CTSI Quantitative Methods Pilot Program

The Design, Biostatistics and Epidemiology (DBE) Core, the Pilot Core, and the Novel Methodologies Core of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) are partnering to offer a pilot project program that is designed to foster innovative research and support the career development of junior investigators in the fields of statistics, biostatistics, and epidemiology. The Quantitative Methods Pilot Program (QuMP) will support two new projects in interdisciplinary, translational research, where each project represents a true collaboration between a quantitative methods researcher and a clinical scientist. A true collaboration is one in which both individuals have significant, defined roles in the research project. The term “clinical scientist” is meant to denote an individual who is engaged in clinical/patient oriented research, as defined by the NIH (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/women_min/training/tsld007.htm) or an individual who has an active clinical practice. For the purposes of this program, a quantitative methods researcher is an investigator with a background in statistics, biostatistics, epidemiology, mathematics, or a related field and who brings that expertise to the project.

The two investigators must be independent of each other; one may not be the direct research supervisor or formal mentor of the other. It is incumbent upon the applicants to delineate clearly the role of each investigator and to convince the reviewers that both team members will be actively involved in the project. Similarly, if the proposed project is related to an existing collaboration, it is incumbent upon the applicants to convince the reviewers that the project is a new area of exploration distinct from related work.

Although the two investigators may have collaborated in the past, the research project proposed must be novel and not part of an ongoing project.

Eligibility
The principal investigator must be a quantitative researcher with a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Pittsburgh at the rank of Assistant Professor/Research Assistant Professor. A clinical scientist must be included as a co-investigator on the project, and he or she may be of any professorial rank. Instructors, research scientists, research associates, fellows, and postdoctoral researchers are not eligible to serve as primary investigators, nor are investigators from other institutions.

Criteria for Review
To be considered for this pilot program, applications must include the following:

- An explicit interdisciplinary focus pairing a quantitative methodology researcher with a clinical researcher
- Discussion of ways in which the pilot study will lead to larger research efforts
- *A novel way to make use of any existing quantitative methodology or the development of a new quantitative methodology*

The following will be considered in evaluating applications:

- Soundness of scientific principles
- Novelty of scientific approach
- Background and experience of investigators
• Adequacy of resources and environment
• Appropriateness of the budget for the proposed work

Budget Limitations
Funds are available to support two awards at a level of $20,000/award. The funding period will be from July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013. No extensions of this award period will be made. Please note that funds cannot be expended for any part of the research that is governed by a required protocol (IRB, hSCRO, IBC, CORID) until that protocol has been approved.

Application
The first page of the application must be a cover sheet that gives the name, degree, academic title, primary departmental affiliation, and contact information (telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address) of the principal investigator and of the co-investigator. If salary support is not requested for these investigators, effort must be cost-shared by the respective department. The principal investigator, the co-investigator, and their respective department chairs or appropriate responsibility center directors (e.g., division chief or institute director) who can authorize cost sharing against an Entity-02 or -04 institutional account must sign the cover sheet. These signatures certify agreement to provide the investigator’s cost shared effort and acknowledgement that no indirect costs will be provided. The appropriate institutional account numbers against which the efforts will be charged must also be provided. If the project is funded, cost shared effort must be reflected on the SPAR document and copies of the relevant SPAR document must be provided to the CTSI administration upon request. Please note, an applicant who is currently the recipient of a mentored career development award (e.g., K12, K23, etc.) or a foundation-supported career development award may subsume the effort devoted to his or her QuMP project under the career development award as long as this project proposed is consistent with the career development award. Please contact Dr. Stephen Wisniewski, Director, CTSI DBE Core, wisniew@edc.pitt.edu, for verification of eligibility to subsume effort related to this announcement.

The rest of the application must consist of the following sections, and the document should be single-spaced and in 11 pt Arial font with one inch margins:
• Abstract (No more than 250 words)
• Research Plan (Total of no more than six single-sided pages)
  o Specific aims
  o Background and Significance
  o Preliminary Studies (optional)
  o Design and Methods
• Human Subjects Protection (if applicable, two page maximum)
• Bibliography (one page maximum)
• Budget and Justification; please see below for instructions.

NIH format biographical sketches of the principal investigator and the co-investigator; please see below for instructions.

Budget and Budget Justification
The NIH-format budget page (PHS 398 Form 4; revised June 2009, http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html; later revisions are also acceptable)
must be used. An additional page should be included for the budget justification; all pieces of equipment, including any type of computer or related device, must be explicitly justified as critical to the performance of the proposed research. Funds may not be requested for publication or travel expenses. As indicated above, the intent of this program is to support the development of quantitative methods for biomedical research. Thus, funds may not be used to support clinical work, including the recruitment of study subjects. Any salary requested should include federal fringe benefit rates.

**Biographical Sketches and Support Pages**

The NIH-format biographical sketch (see page I-71 of the SF424 Application Guide, updated July 25, 2011, [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm)) and the NIH-format Other Support document (see page III-8 of the SF424 Application Guide) must be included for the principal investigator and for any other investigator whose expertise will be critical for successful completion of the project. The personal statement in any biographical sketch should be appropriate for the research proposed in the QuMP application. If a further update to the SF 424 Application Guide is extant at the time of application submission, the biographical sketch and other support information should conform to the “Instructions for a Biographical Sketch” and the section on “Other Support Information” in the updated Guide.

Applications are to be submitted electronically, as a pdf file, to Ms. Melissa Penkrot, mam266@pitt.edu, by noon on Monday, April 30, 2012. No exceptions will be made to these receipt dates. Within one week of the receipt date, each applicant should receive an e-mail message notifying him or her that his or her application has been received. If an applicant does not receive such notification, he or she should contact Ms. Penkrot.

Questions about the program should be directed to Dr. Wisniewski, wisniew@edc.pitt.edu.