



*The Michael Parr Fund for Women's Health Research and Education  
at the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center  
(310) 794-9039  
UCLA National Center of Excellence in Women's Health*

## **Pilot & Feasibility Funding Available for Research in Women's Health: UCLA Sex Differences in Metabolic syndrome SCORE\Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center Executive Advisory Board Awards**

**December 4th, 2018 Announcement**

Pilot funding is available for UCLA researchers, including all researchers at the UCLA Westwood and Santa Monica Campuses in DGSOM and UCLA College, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, LA BioMed at Harbor-UCLA and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, who perform research related to disease processes that influence or are influenced by metabolic syndrome. Pilots may include basic or clinical/translational studies.

The SCORE (U54 Specialized Center of Research Excellence, Karen Reue, PD) in the Metabolic Syndrome is an NIH-funded program that will support grantees at levels of \$25,000-\$50,000 for one year of seed funding for novel research projects that investigate sex as a biological factor in metabolic disease. The intent is to attract new investigators to the field of sex differences in disease, to provide resources to enhance the ability to perform research relevant to sex differences at UCLA, and to accelerate project development to prepare investigators for applications for further NIH funding.

### **Rationale**

Women and men exhibit significant differences in the development of cardio-metabolic diseases. The incidence of these diseases increases in the presence of a group of risk factors known as the metabolic syndrome (MetSyn)—abdominal obesity, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and aberrant blood lipid profiles. Sex differences exist in all of the components of MetSyn, and it is critical to understand these factors to provide optimal treatment to both men and women. In addition, the sex differences mean that one sex is protected from disease by sex-biasing mechanisms. Understanding these mechanisms might point to novel therapeutic targets.

**Research proposed through funding from the UCLA Sex Differences in Metabolic Syndrome SCORE/Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center should be consistent with the stated mission of the NIH-funded U54 SCORE and the Iris Cantor Center:**

The U54 program seeks to provide seed funding for novel research projects that investigate sex as a biological factor in metabolic disease as a means to promote comprehensive health care for women. Our explicit goal is to build a larger interactive community of investigators at UCLA with interlocking research questions centered on sex differences in basic biology and in disease, translatable to the clinic, in the broad area of metabolic disease. The P&F effort is intended to produce research outcomes, in part by enriching the educational opportunities for sex as a biological variable and women's health at UCLA. A central component of this effort is to provide seed funding for research projects that show high promise, but are in early stages of development. Thus, we will mount a P&F Grant Program with competitive applications for funding from the large UCLA research community. Our specific aims include:

- To encourage and support interdisciplinary research on sex differences/women's health in the components of MetSyn (obesity, hyperlipidemia, high blood pressure, insulin resistance/type 2 diabetes) or related disorders (cardiovascular disease, etc.). These studies may include numerous areas, such as:
  - sex differences and similarities for aspects of the MetSyn in humans or model organisms. This may include physiological, molecular, and -omics characterization.
  - sex differences at the cellular level, including how genetic sex differences influence cells, organs, organ systems, and organisms
  - sex differences in MetSyn components across the lifespan
  - sex differences in treatment or clinical intervention of MetSyn components
- To translate research findings on MetSyn into improvements in health care practice for women and men
- To create access for investigators that are new to the area of sex differences in metabolic syndrome to specialized research resources to attain research goals regarding sex as a biological variable/women's health
- To foster collaboration of investigators at UCLA with investigators of the SCORE program on Sex Differences in Metabolic Syndrome
- To support study of sex differences in metabolism by a wide range of investigators, including women and diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and to promote the

**Funding Amount Available:** \$25,000 - \$50,000 one-year pilot awards for all types of research

Eligible investigators will fall into one of the categories below:

(Category 1) New investigators without substantial current or previous non-mentored NIH research support as a principal investigator (current or previous support from other sources being modest).

(Category 2) Established investigators with no previous work in women's health/sex and gender based differences who wish to apply their expertise to a problem in this area in order to have the potential to develop a new future research focus

(Category 3) Established investigators in women's health/sex and gender based differences who propose testing innovative ideas that represent a clear departure from ongoing research interests.

It is expected that the majority of investigators will fall into the first two categories, with an emphasis on assisting junior investigators at critical early stages of their careers. Funding may be requested for any purpose

which meets the needs of the investigator (s) and complies with UCLA policies for expenditure of funds. Please note that highest priority for the pilots will be given to pilots that would likely lead to R21s or R01s (or equivalent level funding from extramural sources) consistent with the Iris Cantor-UCLA Women's Health Center/UCLA National Center of Excellence in Women's Health mission within 2-3 years.

### **Pilot Submission Timeline and Selection Process**

Submit the application contact information and checklist document, your one-page letter of intent, and biosketch(es) as **one PDF file** by e-mail for review. **All submissions from interested UCLA faculty must be received by noon, Wednesday, January 23, 2019** (see contact information below). The letter of intent should indicate/include:

1. Applicant name/rank, and affiliation
2. Category of Investigator (see description of categories above)
3. Proposal title
4. Hypothesis of the project
5. Brief summary of planned project
6. Relationship of planned project to U54 SCORE mission and aims
7. Long range research goals for this pilot work for future research
8. Budget amount requested
9. NIH biosketch(s) of investigators (attachments)

Investigators may request up to \$50,000 for a one-year period.

The Review Committee will review letters of intent and contact investigators whom they wish to submit full pilot proposals by **Monday, March 18, 2019**. Funded projects will begin **July 1, 2019** for the period **July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020**.

Criteria for selection include: (a) quality of the proposed research; (b) credentials of PI and Co-investigators (if included).; (c) relatedness to the SCORE theme and mission.

### **Submission of Letter of Intent**

The letter of intent, biosketch(es), and other attachments should be e-mailed as one PDF file to the attention of Sierra Moon at [sdmoon@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:sdmoon@mednet.ucla.edu); (310-794-8063). **All application materials must be received by noon, Wednesday, January 23, 2019. Any materials received after noon, Wednesday, January 23, 2019 will not be considered.**