



Michigan Medicine
Peking University Health Science Center

北京大学医学部 - 密西根大学医学院
临床与转化医学联合研究所



JOINT INSTITUTE for Translational and Clinical Research

Michigan Medicine– Peking University Health Science Center Joint Institute for Translational and Clinical Research

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2022

Purpose

The Michigan Medicine and Peking University Health Science Center (PKUHSC) Joint Institute for Translational and Clinical Research (JI) seeks to identify joint proposals that advance robust collaborations between the institutions that will lead to transformative science and future extramural funding. Proposals must be jointly put forth by Co-Principal Investigators who are full-time faculty at U-M Medical School (UMMS) and PKUHSC.

Overview

The Michigan Medicine-PKUHSC Joint Institute for Translational and Clinical Research (<http://www.puuma.org/>) was officially launched in October 2010 with a combined commitment of \$14M for joint research projects on diseases that are important to the U.S. and China. In October 2015, the Memorandum of Understanding between Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC was renewed for another five years. An overview of the JI has been published in 2021¹.

In the initial phase, research programs focused on pulmonary, cardiovascular, liver, renal diseases, cancer, and precision health. The JI2.0 strategies and priorities have now shifted from the organ-based programs to science themed research that focuses on cancer, brain science, data science, and reproductive health. This current call for proposals is for collaborative cancer projects, focusing on the following three themes: (1) Stemness, Lineage Plasticity, Epigenetics and Drug Resistance (2) Tumor Microenvironment and Immunotherapies (3) Leukemia, Bone Marrow Transplantation, and GVHD. Priority is given to the faculty with the established collaboration and demonstrated significant collaborative research outcomes. Proposals that align or inform clinical research will be favored. Successful proposals will be those that leverage the unique strengths of each university that are difficult for either Michigan Medicine or PKUHSC is able to pursue alone.

Awards

Funding for all awards originate equally from Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC with the intent that the respective amounts will be spent within the originating country. There are three types of awards this year:

- **Discovery Awards:**
 - Funding level: up to \$100,000/year (\$50,000/year from PKUHSC, \$50,000/year from Michigan Medicine) for two years.
 - Purpose: to promote collaborations that have yet to be fully established.
- **Pilot Awards:**
 - Funding Level: up to \$300,000/year (\$150,000/year from PKUHSC, \$150,000 /year from Michigan Medicine) for two years.
 - Purpose: to strengthen partnership between the investigators who have demonstrated track-record of collaboration between the two institutions. This award category also includes proposals that are considered as interventional clinical trials.

- **Innovation Bridge Awards:**
 - Funding Level: up to \$100,000/year (\$50,000/year from PKUHSC, \$50,000/year from Michigan Medicine) for one year.
 - Purpose: to support partnership between the investigators to further develop their innovative technologies and to accelerate translation of research into product. This award category will be evaluated by the potential success of technology commercialization.

Eligibility

- Michigan Medicine: full-time faculty from Michigan Medicine or from health science schools (*note: cost sharing is expected from schools outside of Michigan Medicine to obtain matching support from the U-M Vice President's office*).
- PKUHSC: full-time faculty who does not currently hold another active grant.

Submission Due Date

- Announcement of RFP July 29, 2022
- Submission for Letters of Intent (LOI) August 29, 2022

Letter of Intent

Letters of Intent (LOI) must be submitted by August 29, 2022 to: Ning Zhang (zhangning@bjmu.edu.cn), Qiudan Sun (sunqd@bjmu.edu.cn), Jiancheng Wang (wang-ic@bjmu.edu.cn) and Ming Xu (xuminghi@bjmu.edu.cn), cc to Xiaojia Li (lixiaoja@bjmu.edu.cn), Yu Xiao (xiaoyu@bjmu.edu.cn), Yuan Liu (liuy8953@bjmu.edu.cn) and Yuan Cao (caoyuan9004@bjmu.edu.cn). LOI applicants will be notified whether to complete a full application after evaluation by leadership at both institutions as to the potential for the project to address the goals of the JI.

The letter of intent must include:

- I. Project title
- II. Name of the Principal Investigators (PIs), their departments and contact information
- III. Desired Award Category (i.e. Discovery, Pilot, Innovation Bridge)
- IV. 5 keywords
- V. An abstract (300 words or less) that describes in separate subheadings listing the brief background, specific aims, and expected outcomes
- VI. NIH style biographical sketch of the PIs

Submission Process

Please submit all documents as a single PDF file, including a request for notice of receipt to: Ning Zhang (zhangning@bjmu.edu.cn), Qiudan Sun (sunqd@bjmu.edu.cn), Jiancheng Wang (wang-ic@bjmu.edu.cn) and Ming Xu (xuminghi@bjmu.edu.cn), cc to Xiaojia Li (lixiaoja@bjmu.edu.cn), Yu Xiao (xiaoyu@bjmu.edu.cn), Yuan Liu (liuy8953@bjmu.edu.cn) and Yuan Cao (caoyuan9004@bjmu.edu.cn). LOI applicants will be notified whether to complete a full application after evaluation by leadership at both institutions as to the potential for the project to address the goals of the JI.

Required Elements of Full Proposal

- I. Completed and Signed Face Page (Appendix I: Face Page Template):
 - a. Project Title

- b. Name, signatures of PIs and Department Chairs with contact information from both Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC (*note: if the U-M applicant's main appointment is outside of Michigan Medicine, cost-sharing approval from the respective Department Chair should be included here*)
- c. Requested funding and established cost-sharing for each institution with a total broken out by project year

II. Project Description

- Formatting requirement: single spaced, 11 pt. font in Calibri or Arial.
 - Page limits:
 - Discovery Award: 5 pages
 - Pilot Award: 10 pages
 - Innovation Bridge Awards: 5 pages

The full proposal should include the following sections:

- a. Executive summary
- b. Objectives (no more than 4)
- c. Background: Existing status quo/state-of-the-art and challenges
- d. Research Strategy and Methodology:
 - i. Experimental design/rationale
 - ii. Description of major tasks and respective task leaders
 - iii. Proposed timeline for major tasks and milestones
 - iv. Future directions and research plans for the next three years
 - v. Opportunity for subsequent funding (beyond the scope of the seed project)

III. Plan for Protection of Human Subjects

IV. NIH Biosketch of Key Personnel (maximum 4 pages per individual)

V. Plans (if any) for interchange of personnel between institutions (include: name of mentors and trainees, training time frame, training objectives/curriculums/activities, description of the trainees' major role in the project)

VI. Identification of Project-relevant Background Intellectual Property (if applicable)

VII. Letters of support from Department or Divisional Chair with cost-sharing approval

VIII. Budget and Justification (Appendix II: Budget Template):

Line item budget:

- a. Personnel:
 - up to 50% of total budget
 - PKUHSC personnel budget limits to temporary research members
 - name/role on project
 - percentage of effort
 - base salary/fringe benefits
 - tuition and stipend shall not be included in the JI budget
- b. Supplies/materials
- c. Participant fees/costs (i.e., expenses per participant including travel, tests, payment for time)
- d. Travel (for PIs to meet face to face in Ann Arbor/Beijing and attend the annual Joint Institute symposia; \$4,000 per trip and up to two trips per year)

Budget justification:

For each category above briefly describe and provide justification for each item. Costs must be broken out for both Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC participants. Lodging and other living expenses are to be borne by the home institutions of the visiting researchers.

Evaluation of Project Proposals

Proposals will be reviewed by peer reviewers familiar with the content areas and funding environment in the U.S. and China respectively, on the following modified NIH criteria in making the selection of successful proposals:

- Significance: impact and significance of the work
- Investigators: qualifications of PIs/mentors
- Innovation: shifting current research and clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, or interventions
- Approach: appropriateness of research design and methodology
- Environment: resources available at both institutions to carry out the proposed project

In addition, a major emphasis will be placed on the potential for meaningful collaboration that will be demonstrated by ongoing exchange, trust building, insights into the cultural differences in how research is executed, a willingness to work within the JI structure, and commitment to stay engaged in the collective work of the JI including an interest in the projects of others.

The JI Executive Committee (EC) will consolidate the reviewer comments, and further review the proposals based on the additional criteria (below), prior to making final recommendations to the JI Executive Board for approval of funding decisions:

Evaluation criteria:

- Synergy between Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC
- Relevance to the objective of the collaboration
- Potential for external funding
- Stewardship of limited JI funds available for proposals

Inputs from the review process at Michigan Medicine and PKUHSC are harmonized through close dialogue between co-Directors of the respective executive committees to arrive at rankings and assignment of available funds.

Priorities

The proposals should clearly indicate: 1) how the proposed study will lead to the desired impacts, and 2) how the successful conduct of the seed project will enhance the prospect for securing third party funding. Moreover, preferences will be given to proposals that are able to identify specific external research programs for future funding through Requests for Proposals.

Cost-sharing derived from sources outside the JI demonstrates the interest of third parties in the field and is strongly recommended. The cost-sharing would be used to offset some of the funding that is coming from the JI. The source, amount, and nature of such cost-sharing must be identified in writing and supported with a letter of commitment as part of the application.

Release of Funds

The funding allocation for each project will be informed by the estimated budgets that are reviewed within the context of the submitted project proposals and suggested modifications may be part of the award negotiation. Both PIs shall agree with the Joint Institute Policy on Intellectual Collaboration, Authorship, and Data Sharing

(Appendix III) and obtain IRB approvals from both PKUHSC and Michigan Medicine and go through other relevant procedures in order to access the funds.

Projects should have milestones and/or deliverables after year-one and year-two for progress and quality reviews. The Awards are two-year awards; however, the second year grant will be released based on year-one progress reports. Upon project completion, any residual funds will be returned to the JI account.

Faculty salary will be considered only for *UMMS faculty who are integrally involved in the research aspects of the proposal*. Salaries for other non-faculty personnel may be included.

Project Review

Funded projects will be reviewed at year-one and year-two during the funding period. The reviews will include assessments of scientific updates, progresses towards long-term goals, and obtaining external funds.

ⁱ Advancing science and education through a novel collaboration platform between the University of Michigan and Peking University Health Science Center. Kolars, Zhan. *FASEB BioAdvances*. 2021;00:1–11 DOI: 10.1096/fba.2020-00128