



The UMMS Faculty Scholars Award: Reach for the Sky - Supporting & Advancing Faculty Growth During Times of Increased Family Care Responsibilities

TA Moore Simas; N Byatt; S Muehlschlegel; JA Zitzewitz; KM Deligiannidis; S Adhami; M Socolovsky; JK Ockene, LE Thorndyke
University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts



Background

Research shows that heavy responsibilities for family care can impede talented junior faculty from meeting career goals. One practical solution to this challenge is to provide supplementary funding to enable a researcher or clinician to continue their research and scholarly activities while meeting family obligations; thus the UMMS Faculty Scholars Award was created.

Description of the UMMS Faculty Scholar Award

- Developed by Women's Faculty Committee; Women's Leadership Work Group; Faculty Affairs
- Funded by UMMS, Clinical and Translational Science Center, & UMass Memorial Health Care
- Provides up to \$30,000 per year per award with 4 awards given each year
- Funds may be used for personnel, services, supplies, and/or clinical time 'buy out'
- Eligibility criteria: male or female; assistant or associate professor; tenure or non-tenure track.

Goals of the UMMS Faculty Scholar Award program

- To assist faculty during a finite period of increased family care responsibilities
- To provide resources to continue research/scholarly work as family obligations are addressed
- To enable faculty to surmount obstacles that inhibit academic productivity and advancement
- To increase diversity and representation of women at higher faculty ranks
- To lead in efforts which promote gender equity.

Application Requirements

- 1 page personal statement
- 2 page project plan
- 2 letters of support
- Budget & budget justification
- NIH Biosketch

Objective

To describe the impact of the UMMS Faculty Scholar Award as a mechanism to support faculty during periods of increased family care responsibilities.

Methods

Evaluation Criteria

- Personal statement reflecting responsibility for care of children, partner or family member(s)
- How effectively award will address applicant's needs and benefit their progress
- Quality of applicant's academic achievements and potential for future productivity
- Quality of proposed research or scholarly project
- Probability of project receiving external funding
- Support for application via letters of support.

Results

Dr. Tiffany A. Moore Simas: "The FSA allowed me to hire a clinical research technician which further allowed for the domino delegation that facilitated continued growth of a fledgling research division under my directorship and my own research initiatives, despite my being on maternity leave, growing and nurturing my family."

Dr. Nancy Byatt: "The FSA provided a launching pad for my transition to independent research when I was very busy full-time clinician with family responsibilities."

Dr. Kristina M. Deligiannidis: "A one-year bridge to protect my time to conduct research (and decrease clinical responsibilities) while I was at a critical junction of data completion/manuscript publication! K23 grant submission/resubmission"

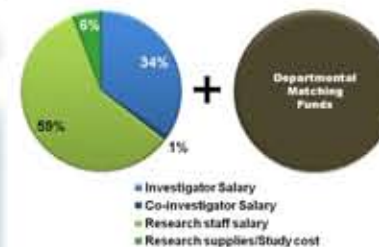
Dr. Seema Adhami: "The FSA gave me the gift of time in a time of need! At a transitional time, in both my professional and family life, it has prevented academic progress from stalling."

Dr. Susanne Muehlschlegel: "Thank God for the FSA: It felt like I was given a huge opportunity and a rear engine to continue my research during my postpartum transition when I was so busy with a newborn and young toddler."

Dr. Merav Socolovsky: "The FSA allowed me to keep the momentum in my research in spite of a funding hiatus."

Dr. Jill A. Zitzewitz: "As the mother of four school-aged children, the faculty scholar award has enhanced my path to independent research in the area of neurodegenerative diseases, yielding a significant positive impact on my career trajectory."

How were the funds used?



Funds Awarded	Goals	Outcomes
January 2011	Nancy Byatt, DO, MBA, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry - Prepare NIH K23 proposal - Obtain pilot data for K23 proposal - Increase publication list	- Pilot data obtained - Manuscripts: 4 published, 6 submitted; 2 under review, 4 under revision, 7 published abstracts - Grants: K23 submission planned (Oct 2012)
	Susanne Muehlschlegel, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Neurology (Neurocritical Care Division) - Continue ongoing pilot trial - Hire personnel to create REDCap data entry tool - Publish preliminary data for K23 submission; increase publication list	- Pilot trial 90% completed, ongoing; REDCap database in use - Manuscripts: 3 published, 2 actively writing, 12 abstracts accepted - Grants: K23 submission planned (Jun 2013)
	Jill A. Zitzewitz, PhD, Research Associate Professor, Biochemistry & Molecular Pharmacology - Support path to independent research in misfolding of proteins involved in ALS	- New research program growing with collaborations established - Presentations: 2 of recent results at national and international ALS meetings - Manuscripts: 2 in preparation - Grants: 1 submitted, 1 planned (Fall 2012)
July 2011	Kristina M. Deligiannidis, MD, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Ob/Gyn - Complete data analyses; publish manuscripts - Submit NIH K23 career development award - Obtain training: Career Development Institute for Psychiatry (Univ. Pittsburgh/Stanford)	- Manuscripts/abstracts/talks: 4 published, 5 submitted; 4 in prep; 11 published abstracts (poster & oral); 6 invited talks - Grants: Submitted NIH K23 (funding recommended); 1 funded; 2 under review
	Tiffany A. Moore Simas, MD, MPH, MEd, Associate Professor, Ob/Gyn and Pediatrics - Support pilot study - Augment growth of fledgling research div. - Systematize biologic specimen collections for basic science colleagues	- 90% pilot trial completed, ongoing - Grants: UMMS CTSA PPP & LSMF funded; R01, ADA & March of Dimes under review; Manuscripts: 3 accepted, 2 revisions, 5 submitted - Promotion to Associate Professor - Supporting 5 basic science labs with bio specimen collections
January 2012	Seema Adhami, MD, MRCP (U.K.), Assistant Professor, Pediatrics (Pediatric Neurology Division) - Based on collected pilot data, to prospectively study efficacy of high-dose oral steroids as first-line treatment for Infantile Spasms	- Prospective study launched - Abstract on pilot data accepted for publication - Manuscript in preparation
	Merav Socolovsky, MB, BS, PhD, Assistant Professor, Cancer Biology and Pediatrics - Continue productive research program into recent discovery of global DNA demethylation in erythroid differentiation	- Enhanced ability to reinvest and renew for future funded research - Pilot data and scholarly output forthcoming

Conclusions

UMMS Faculty Scholars Award Program has:

- Resulted in increased scholarly productivity and academic advancement of junior faculty.
- Led to continued growth and support of awardees via peer-to-peer group mentoring.
- Increased departmental financial support for scholars' academic pursuits.
- Increased institutional awareness of importance & value of tangible financial support for faculty.
- Become a successful mechanism to support junior faculty with increased family obligations.