UCSF among ten institutions to receive grants to retain clinical scientists

December 3, 2015 - 8:50am

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The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) today announced grants totaling $5.4 million [3] to 10 medical schools to establish a Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists within each of their institutions, including UCSF through a program administered by the university’s Clinical & Translational Science Institute (CTSI) [4]. Each school will receive $540,000 over five years to provide stronger institutional support and supplemental funds for early-career physician scientists to maintain productivity during periods of excessive extraprofessional demands. At UCSF, the program will be led by Department of Psychiatry faculty members Kristine Yaffe, MD [2] (program director), and Christina Mangurian, MD, MAS [1] (program co-director).

DDCF launched the Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists (the Fund) to build upon a growing momentum in the medical research field toward supporting young physician scientists through phases of intense, extraprofessional career obstacles. Studies have revealed that up to 44
percent of young physicians with full-time faculty appointments at academic medical schools leave their posts within 10 years. Furthermore, while women enter academic medical centers at about the same rate as men, they make up only 19 percent of faculty at the full professor level. The causes of this disparity are varied and complex, but one contributing factor is the load of transitory but significant outside responsibilities such as childcare, elder care or family illness that may arise and preclude the career growth of many young faculty members, particularly women.

?As a foundation committed to fostering the careers of physician scientists in academic medicine, we sought a way to retain promising early-career faculty during times they are most challenged by caregiving demands,? said Betsy Myers, program director for Medical Research. ?We look forward to partnering with the 10 awardee institutions on this crucial effort and hope that their work inspires the academic community to adopt similar models for their own faculty.? 

Several medical schools have begun to address this issue with programs that provide financial support and resources specifically to researchers who are managing these conflicting responsibilities, and their effort has shown a return on investment in the form of retention of the scientists, promotion within academia, and attainment of new grants.

?As a female physician scientist balancing clinical care while directing a research program and parenting three teenage boys alongside my physician-scientist husband, I can attest to the critical importance of this new DDCF Fund,? said Rochelle Walensky, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, advisor to the foundation?s Medical Research Program and a recipient of a similar award at the Massachusetts General Hospital. ?Extra support during the most vulnerable time of my career—the transition from fellow to faculty while raising children?allowed me to focus on building my research foundation, exposed me to a breadth of faculty with similar work-life juggling acts, and reflected my institution?s commitment to my multidisciplinary career path.? 

Each medical school selected to administer the Fund will identify faculty members who will receive supplemental, flexible funds that complement and sustain their productivity on clinical research projects focused on important biomedical problems. The funds will provide the physician scientists with the extra personnel, services and/or supplies they may need to continue their projects while managing outside caregiving responsibilities. In total, over five years, the Fund will support approximately 100 researchers in building their careers.

The full list of institutions selected to administer the Fund can be found on the third page of DDCF?s official announcement [3].
The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people’s lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child wellbeing, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties. The foundation’s Medical Research Program supports clinical research that advances the translation of biomedical discoveries into new preventions, diagnoses and treatments for human diseases. To learn more about the program, visit ddcf.org.

About UCSF Psychiatry

The UCSF Department of Psychiatry and the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute are among the nation’s foremost resources in the fields of child, adolescent, adult and geriatric mental health. Together they constitute one of the largest departments in the UCSF School of Medicine, with a mission focused on research (basic, translational, clinical), teaching, patient care, and public service. UCSF Psychiatry has an organizational structure that crosses all major UCSF sites - Parnassus, Mission Bay, Laurel Heights, Mt. Zion, San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, the San Francisco VA Medical Center and UCSF Fresno.

About CTSI

The Clinical & Translational Science Institute (CTSI) facilitates the rapid translation of research to improvements in patient and community health. It is a cross-school, campus-wide institute with scientist leaders at its helm. To achieve its goals, CTSI provides infrastructure, services, and training to support clinical and translational research. To advance its mission, it develops broad coalitions and partnerships at the local and national levels to enable a transformation of the research environment. Established in 2006, CTSI was among the first of the now 60-member Clinical & Translational Science Awards (CTSA) consortium funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

About UCSF

UC San Francisco (UCSF) is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. It includes top-ranked graduate schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy, a graduate division with nationally renowned programs in basic, biomedical, translational and population sciences, as well as a preeminent biomedical research enterprise and two top-ranked hospitals, UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital San Francisco.

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