

DIVISION OF CANCER PREVENTION & POPULATION SCIENCES
University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas

**Duncan Family Institute Mentored Junior Faculty Fellowship in
Cancer Prevention Research**

*Open to U.S. Citizens, Permanent Residents, and
Foreign Nationals Holding Visas*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

November 2009 (Round 2)

Phase 1 – Initial Application deadline: February 16, 2010

Phase 2 – Invitation to Submit a Full Application deadline: May 3, 2010
(Phase 1 applicants will be notified of Phase 1 review outcome in early March)

Phase 3 – Interview: Planned for May/June 2010

Follow the link “Duncan Family Institute Junior Faculty Fellowship” from the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program website to access program information and required forms:

<http://www.mdanderson.org/education-and-research/education-and-training/schools-and-programs/research-training/programs-and-courses/cancer-prevention-research-training-program/index.html>

Purpose: This funding for a *Duncan Family Institute Mentored Junior Faculty Fellowship in Cancer Prevention Research* will support the critical transition of individuals from training positions to junior faculty, launching them towards research independence. Such funding fills a gap between support available to postdoctoral fellows and other early career scientists transitioning to a faculty position at the assistant professor level. In most cases, fellows will take advantage of the research resources and infrastructure of their faculty mentors and work with them to build and focus their own research projects and scientific agendas. The expectation is for fellows to develop independence from the mentor's research focus over the time of the fellowship.

For many emerging scientists in cancer prevention and control, disruptive gaps in funding and scientific productivity are created when shifting from training fellowships into faculty positions because training awards cannot support those who are no longer trainees. Some are forced off their career path to take less than ideal positions until research funding or opportunities for research independence become available. Other promising trainees, in spite of their readiness for promotion, may not be promoted because bridge funds from a supervising faculty mentor are unavailable. This lengthens time in training, delays career progress, and flattens the career trajectory, effectively denying these trainees the competitive advantage afforded to grant seekers who are promoted to junior faculty positions, as reviewers of career development applications look favorably on early signs of career progression. Ideally, providing continuous support through this critical transition will prevent gaps and launch junior scientists faster towards independent research careers.

Cancer prevention research can be categorized as primary, secondary or tertiary prevention research. For purposes of this funding opportunity, the Duncan Family Institute is focusing the scope on primary and secondary cancer prevention (and tertiary only as it informs primary and secondary prevention). Examples of research that falls within the scope of this funding opportunity include: prevention of second primary cancers; cancer prevention-relevant molecular and genetic animal studies, such as a chemoprevention study in animals; and research on lifestyle changes and interventions to reduce the risk of second primaries in survivors. Examples of research that falls outside the scope of this funding opportunity include: research on prevention of recurrences or metastases; research to predict metastases; and research on symptom management and quality of life in cancer patients and survivors.

Funding duration: Mentored junior faculty fellowships are funded for a maximum of two years, renewed annually based on research progress and availability of funds.

Eligibility:

- **Citizenship:** *This faculty fellowship is available without regard to the applicant's citizenship status.* Foreign nationals must be in the USA legally and have valid and appropriate visas.
- **Prior Training & Education:** Applicants may have training from a variety of disciplines in the basic biomedical sciences, medicine, biomedical statistics, epidemiology, behavioral and social sciences, nursing, and other related public health disciplines.
- **Applicant Training status:** Applicants may be graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, non-tenure track junior faculty, or others seeking research careers in cancer prevention and control. Preference is for candidates who are early in their careers or who are shifting their career focus to the field of cancer prevention and control.

At the time of the fellowship appointment, (and not at application submission) applicants must have been appointed to a faculty appointment at the level of Instructor Non-tenure Track Research Appointment (NTRA), which is necessary for serving as principal investigator for grant applications at M. D. Anderson. Fellows must have their primary appointment at M. D. Anderson in the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences (department of Behavioral Science, Clinical Cancer Prevention, Epidemiology or Health Disparities Research) in which one of their mentors has a faculty appointment. The process to appoint an applicant selected for this fellowship to the position of Instructor NTRA will begin after notification of fellowship award. The Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) office will assist applicants selected for fellowship appointment with this process.

Upon completion of the Fellowship (at the end of the two year period or earlier), fellows will continue as an Instructor NTRA assuming the fellow meets all requirements for this position.

- **Grant Writing Plans:** *Applicants must have prior training and experience sufficient to be highly competitive for externally funded grants early in the appointment.* Applicants must describe in their applications plans to submit grants early within the initial appointment, for either career development or research awards, or both. The overall objective is for the fellow and the mentors to secure funding and salary support to provide 100% support for the individual at the end of the two year fellowship.

- **Funding Experience:** *Applicants who have already been awarded career development awards are not eligible to apply for this funding mechanism.* Moreover, individuals supported by these funds will become ineligible for support once salary support at 100% has been achieved, either through career development awards or research grants. Fellows who complete successfully for tenure-track appointments with salary and start-up funds become ineligible for support upon appointment.

Fellowship Support: Salaries start at \$65,000 per year plus benefits. Benefits include health insurance, paid institutional holidays, and annual and sick leave. Support is also provided annually for limited research costs, meeting registration and travel expenses, workshop and tuition fees, and reference books (\$10,000 for research and education expenses, and \$1,000 for travel).

Faculty Mentors: Applicants invited to submit a full application must have identified a **minimum of two mentors** with complementary expertise in different disciplines. The primary mentor must have a faculty appointment at the assistant professor level or higher within the Division of Cancer Prevention & Population Sciences at M. D. Anderson, which includes the Departments of Behavioral Science, Clinical Cancer Prevention, Epidemiology, and Health Disparities Research. Other qualified mentors can have appointments in other M. D. Anderson divisions and departments or in institutions elsewhere, but they cannot serve as a primary mentor.

Review Criteria: This fellowship will be competitively awarded based on merit. Full applications will be competitively reviewed using an “NIH-style” approach to peer review. Reviewers external to the Division of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences will be engaged and will form the External Review Panel.

Review criteria include:

1. **Promise:** Is the candidate able to design and implement innovative studies and to seek peer-reviewed research funding? Does the candidate possess a strong record of scholarly achievement? Does the candidate show evidence of scientific productivity and of excellent written and oral communication skills?
2. **Relevance:** Is the research proposed in the Research Statement clearly in the realm of cancer prevention?
3. **Scientific quality:** Is the proposed research of high quality? Are the aims and hypotheses of the research clear and promising? Would these be considered strong and relevant by a study section reviewer? Are the mentors' expertise and research environments suitable for the proposed research? Does their expertise represent complementary areas of strength and emphasis?
4. **Resources and support:** Are the applicants' timeline and resources realistic and adequate? Will suitable space and equipment be provided by the primary or other mentor? Does the faculty mentor indicate a time commitment to the applicant? Do the mentors indicate how they will work together with the applicant in the mentoring process? Will the applicant have guaranteed access to existing data, patients, tissue samples, etc.?

Application Process: The application process consists of three phases:

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| Phase 1 | Initial Application: submission of a short application, |
| Phase 2 | Invitation to Submit a Full Application: upon invitation, submission of a full application |
| Phase 3 | Interview: An in-person interview and scientific talk is required of finalist applicants. |

To begin the application process, the applicant should call or email Ms. Mickie Lubin (phone:713 563-2053; email: dfi@mdanderson.org) and notify her of intention to apply.

Phase 1: Initial Application

Phase 1 – Initial Application deadline: February 16, 2010

The initial application materials include the items listed below. Supplemental items may be requested.

All materials must be sent via email to dfi@mdanderson.org

- Cover Letter
(no more than 2 pages single space)
- Research Statement
(no more than 2 pages single space, not including references)
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) in M. D. Anderson institutional format
(format available on the Cancer Prevention Training Program website under the Duncan Family Institute Faculty Fellowship)
- List of 3 to 4 references
 - Actual letters of reference will be requested as part of the “invitation to submit a full application”;
 - Current mentor/supervisor must be one of the references and must be designated as such.

After review of the initial application, applicants may be invited to submit a full application. Applicants invited to submit a full application but who do not have a mentor or mentors identified can contact the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program Office for assistance in identifying potential mentors whose research interests align with those of the fellowship applicant and whose resources are appropriate to support a fellow appointed through this fellowship.

Those applicants who will not be given further consideration will be contacted by the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program office.

Phase 2: Invitation to Submit a Full Application

Phase 2 – Invited Full Application deadline: May 3, 2010

Applicants invited to submit a full application are required to submit additional materials as listed below.

All materials, including Reference Letters and Mentor Letters of Support, must be sent via email to dfi@mdanderson.org

Required forms can be found under the “Duncan Family Institute Mentored Junior Faculty Fellowship” section of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program website <http://www.mdanderson.org/education-and-research/education-and-training/schools-and-programs/research-training/programs-and-courses/cancer-prevention-research-training-program/dfi-faculty-fellowship/index.html>

- **Research Plan**
Include specific aims, background and significance, preliminary studies (if any), and research design and methods. If the planned research is part of a larger grant program, include the following from the parent grant: face page, abstract, and specific aims. (No more than 5 pages single space not including references or parent grant documents.)
- **Grant Writing Plan and Timeline**
List the names of applications, funding agencies, award mechanisms, and dated milestones. Include a plan for publications. (No more than 2 pages single space.)
- **Reference Letters**
Applicants must provide 3 reference letters, including one from the most current (or most recent) mentor. The applicant is responsible for notifying references and requesting letters.
- **Mentor Support Letters**
All mentors proposed for this fellowship must provide a letter. The applicant is responsible for notifying mentors and requesting letters. If the proposed mentor for the fellowship is also the applicant’s current mentor, it is acceptable for the current mentor to provide both a reference letter and a mentor support letter. (*Guidelines for Mentor Support Letters for this fellowship can be found at <http://www.mdanderson.org/education-and-research/education-and-training/schools-and-programs/research-training/programs-and-courses/cancer-prevention-research-training-program/dfi-faculty-fellowship/mentors-letters-of-support-guidelines.html>*)
- **Mentors’ Profile Form** (*form available on the Cancer Prevention Research Training website under the Duncan Family Institute Junior Faculty Fellowship*)
- **Copies of Mentors’ NIH Biosketches;**
- **Suggested Reviewers (5-6) and Keywords Form:**
(*instructions and form available on the Cancer Prevention Research Training website under the Duncan Family Institute Junior Faculty Fellowship*)
- **Phase 2 Invited Application Checklist** (*form available on the Cancer Prevention Research Training website under the Duncan Family Institute Junior Faculty Fellowship*)

Phase 3: Interview

Phase 3 – Interview – Planned for May / June 2010
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Finalist applicants will be invited for an interview and will be asked to present a scientific talk during their campus visit. Applicants selected for an interview will be contacted by the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program office.

Those applicants who will not be given further consideration will be contacted by the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program office.

Selection of Duncan Family Institute Fellow

Once the application and review process is complete, the Duncan Family Institute Executive Committee in consultation with the Director, Cancer Prevention Research Training Program, will select the applicant to appoint to the fellowship.