Support of Multi-investigator Initiatives in the Case CCC

The Case CCC will provide two modes of support to new research teams that plan to submit large multi-investigator grant applications (usually non-R support mechanisms). Administrative support and travel funds are available to encourage team member meetings as well as meetings with external advisors. For research teams that have an established track record of collaborative research, pilot project funding is also available to support of key research initiatives that are deemed necessary to generate competitive multi-investigator proposals. Requests for both categories of support are competitive and decisions regarding funding will require the research team to demonstrate the active engagement of team members in the proposed project, clearly articulate the significance and innovation of the project, and provide a roadmap for acquisition of external funding.

Administrative Support for Multi-Investigator Applications

Development of effective research teams requires routine strategic planning meetings. The Case CCC will provide funds to support these meetings as well as travel for external advisors. Case CCC administrative staff will organize meeting attendance, food, space, and travel when needed. An administrative point person will also be identified to provide support with proposal assembly as well as acquisition of institution documents and signatures.

Formal requests for administrative support must be made by the leader(s) of the multi-investigator team to the Executive Committee (EC), with advocacy and support of specific Program Leaders interacting with the team. This will involve submission of a 1-2 page summary of the goals of the team/project and an in-person presentation to the EC. Written responses to any concerns expressed by the EC should be submitted soon after the presentation. It is expected that the Executive Committee will make rapid decisions regarding administrative support for the application (within 1 month of the presentation).

Pilot Project Support for Multi-Investigator Applications

Once a multi-investigator team has demonstrated a track record of meetings, research advances, and interactions with external advisors, the Cancer Center Leadership will consider requests for pilot project funding to elevate the competitiveness of a multi-investigator application. Requests will occur in a step-wise manner. Initially, the leaders of the multi-investigator team will meet and discuss their projects and goals with their Program Leaders. The Program Leaders will assess the merit of the proposal and determine if they support its movement forward to the senior leadership of the Case CCC. The team leaders and Program Leaders will then meet with Ruth Keri, Associate Director for Basic Research. This will be an advisory meeting that is meant to facilitate positioning of the application for successful support from the Case CCC. During this meeting, the team leaders should discuss the significance and innovation of the project, the strength of the investigative team, other institutional sources of support, and their plans for submitting a nationally competitive application. Following this discussion, the team leaders may prepare a formal request for project support that includes a written proposal (see guidelines below) and a presentation by the team leaders and specific pilot project leader(s) to the Executive Committee.

If a project is approved for support from the Case CCC, the Executive Committee will work to identify appropriate funding sources which may include, but are not limited to CWRU Philanthropy and Pilot project funding from the Seidman or Taussig Cancer Centers. Thus, it is imperative that the formal request include information regarding all other institutional funding sources for the project. Prioritization of projects will be based on the strengths of the request for funding as well as donor intent, institutional priorities, and priorities described by the Case CCC programs and its strategic plan.

Recipients of pilot funds will be required to present their progress on the multi-investigator project in 6 months and in 1 year following the initiation of Case CCC support.
Multi-Investigator Pilot Project Research Proposal Outline/Review Criteria

Proposal Outline (up to 9.5 pages + biosketches):
Proposals should be as concise as possible and include the following information. The entire proposal, not including biosketches, should not exceed 9.5 pages.

1. Are you responding to an RFA from a funding agency? If so, please attach the RFA, prepare a brief summary of it, and how your proposal will uniquely address its focus (0.5 page).
2. Provide two Specific Aims pages: one that describes your aims for the pilot funding and one that describes the aims of the multi-investigator proposal to be submitted (2 pages).
3. Provide a 3 page proposal for the pilot funds that describes sufficient background for the application, how the aims of the pilot will address a critical need for moving forward with a complete application to the funding agency, and how the aims will be accomplished (3 pages).
4. List the benchmarks that should be completed before submission of the proposal. Include a time frame for grant submission (0.5 page).
5. List all co-investigators for the proposal, including their roles on the project, home departments, and contact information. Detail any prior collaborations of the co-investigators on papers/grants? (1 page)
6. Summarize the extent of meetings that you have had with your co-investigators: how often have you met, how long have you been meeting to discuss this proposal, who attended the meetings, etc. (0.5 page).
7. Summarize your interactions with the funding agency regarding this specific proposal: include the name of your contact, number of times you have discussed the proposal, their feedback for the proposal, etc. (0.5 page).
8. Describe your advisory board(s). Who have you contacted to be on the advisory board(s), what are their qualifications, and what have your interactions been with the members of the advisory board(s) regarding this proposal (1 page)?
9. Describe all funding sources available to the pilot project as well as to the multi-investigator grant (include actual and promised funds from Departments, Schools, CWRU, CCF, UHCMC, other Centers, etc.) (0.5 page).
10. Include biosketches for all co-investigators.

Review Criteria:
1. Does the proposed multi-investigator grant address an important question or critical need? Is it innovative?
2. Are pilot funds necessary to complete key experiments for submitting a proposal to a funding agency?
3. What is the quality of the multi-investigator team? Is the team fully functional? Have they worked together previously? What is the extent of their interactions? Is the proposal lacking any essential areas of expertise?
4. Are the time-frame and proposed outcomes for the pilot reasonable?
5. How responsive is the funding agency to this group/application?
6. Are advisory boards in place and is the team receptive to their input?

Ruth Keri, Associate Director for Basic Research (ruth.keri@case.edu), should be contacted with questions about this process. Application deadline is open.