

Pearl Aldrich Graduate Student and Faculty Awards

for

The Pearl J. Aldrich Endowment in Aging Related Research and Education

The Pearl Aldrich Graduate Student and Faculty Research Awards are funded by the Pearl J. Aldrich Endowment in Aging Related Research and Education. These one-year awards are competitive and intended to support Michigan State University graduate students and faculty who are committed to or strongly considering a career in a discipline that relates to aging. Awards may be used to support new research initiatives or ongoing projects that have a clearly identifiable focus that relates to gerontology or geriatric medicine.

CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED IN SELECTION OF GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDEES

- Importance of the research area to advancing the field of gerontology or geriatric medicine
- Quality and feasibility of the research project
- Evidence of the investigator's commitment to the project
- Evidence of the investigator's commitment to a career in a discipline that relates to aging
- Evidence of research mentorship and mentor commitment to the applicant's professional development as an aging scholar
- Extent of the mentor's ability to facilitate the completion of the research project and the applicant's development of research skills

CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED IN SELECTION OF FACULTY AWARDEES

- Importance of the research area to advancing the field of gerontology or geriatric medicine
- Quality and feasibility of the research project
- Evidence of the investigator's commitment to the project
- Intercollegiate, collaborative, or interdisciplinary research activity
- Nature and extent of involvement of investigator in prior aging research activities
- Evidence of the investigator's commitment to academic and professional development in gerontology or geriatric medicine
- Probability of future external funding to continue research endeavors

GRADUATE STUDENT APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- All Michigan State University graduate students enrolled full-time at MSU (e.g., Masters and Doctoral degree students/candidates), medical students enrolled at MSU, and residents/fellows in training programs affiliated with MSU.

- Each applicant must identify a faculty mentor (not necessarily a gerontologist) who is preferably within their program.
- Priority will be given to applicants who show demonstrated scholarship potential and a commitment to a career in an aging discipline.

FACULTY APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- All Michigan State University faculty are eligible except for current members of the Pearl J. Aldrich Endowment Advisory Committee. This category applies to salaried or volunteer employees of Michigan State University or its affiliated institutions holding a prefixed or non-prefixed academic rank of assistant, associate, or full professor. Community-based faculty with an MSU appointment are eligible to apply. Research specialists employed by MSU are not eligible.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The project proposal should address a research question that has unambiguous relevance to the field of gerontology, the study of the aging processes and individuals as they grow from middle age through later life, or geriatrics, a medical subspecialty devoted to the comprehensive health care of older persons and the well-being of their caregivers. Quantitative and qualitative research proposals may be submitted that utilize descriptive, correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental study designs. Intercollegiate, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research proposals are given special consideration, as are applications that have a strong likelihood of obtaining future extramural funding. The scope of the project should be appropriate for completion in one-year as carry-over funding is not available for this award. Re-submissions of previously funded Aldrich proposals are permitted, to complete unfinished work, however re-submitted proposals are not necessarily given a higher priority for funding.

RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDING

Due to several limitations on the use of award funds as described below, it is strongly recommended that a draft or final budget be forwarded to the Endowment Advisory Committee Chairperson well in advance of the proposal submission deadline for review and revision, should non-covered costs be identified. For faculty, grant awards up to \$20,000 may be requested. For graduate students, grant awards up to \$3,000 may be requested. The funding cycle for all award recipients will commence on July 1 and end on June 30 of each calendar year. Funding may be used to carry out most aspects of the project as disclosed in the proposal, such as securing professional services, hiring personnel (whose only role is to support some aspect of the project); purchasing computer software, supplies and equipment; consulting with a statistician; travelling to sites to collect data; travelling to national professional meetings for the purpose of disseminating research findings; and other study related costs, but may not be used to support salaries and benefits for full-year MSU employed faculty applicants (as defined above) or graduate student project mentors. MSU policies also prohibit the use of award funds for the following purposes:

- Support of graduate assistantships.
- Hiring of graduate students (as defined above in the graduate student applicant eligibility section) by the principle investigator to perform study related work.
- Course teaching “buyouts”
- Gift cards (subject incentive payments must only be provided through the use of “green” checks that can be obtained through the Department of Family Medicine’s Assistant Department Administrator)
- Use of means that are potentially coercive to recruit study subjects, including incentive payments to designated recruiters of study subjects.
- Incentive payments to study subjects who live outside of the United States, its territories, and protectorates.
- Attendance at multiple conferences to present research findings or payment of conference fees for multiple study collaborators, unless a detailed explanation is provided in the budget justification.

Undergraduate students and MSU staff persons may be hired to perform work, with exception of graduate students. MSU faculty who plan to hire MSU employed research assistants must cover their hourly rate and fringe benefits in their budget. Travel expenses must strictly adhere to MSU policies and guidelines (see <http://www.ctrl.msu.edu/COTravel/> for details). Personal computers/printers are considered general office equipment and are not allowed unless a convincing case can be made to show that they are used directly in the conduct of the research. Michigan State University retains title to all special purpose equipment – except computer software – purchased using award funds; when no longer needed for the conduct of the research project, the principle investigator will relinquish their right of possession and release the equipment for disposition by Michigan State University. Carry-over of funds beyond June 30 is not permitted under any circumstances.

ENDOWMENT FUND ADMINISTRATION

The endowment fund is managed by the Pearl J. Aldrich Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Kevin T. Foley, MD, FACP, Associate Professor and Director of Education and Clinical Operations for the Division of Geriatrics in the Department of Family Medicine, MSU College of Human Medicine. The Advisory Committee is composed of faculty representatives from various MSU academic units (Human Medicine, Nursing, Social Work, Psychology) that have an interest in gerontology, geriatric medicine, or research methods. Award disbursements are managed by Ms. Bethany Ford, Assistant Department Administrator, Department of Family Medicine, MSU College of Human Medicine.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be submitted via e-mail to the Advisory Committee Chairperson: kevin.foley@hc.msu.edu. Applications can be sent as Word document (.doc) or Portable Document Format (.pdf) file. Any tables, figures, or images used in the application must be readable and embedded in the proposal text (no appendices permitted). The deadline of receipt of applications is 11:59 PM on May 8, 2016. Failure to follow the guidelines for preparation of the grant proposal will result in rejection of the application.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

1. Applicant data sheet;
2. A current curriculum vitae or resume that includes current professional responsibilities, current and completed research support, and publications;
3. A letter from the applicant describing personal and professional interest in aging research, reasons for seeking support through the Pearl J. Aldrich Endowment, relevant experience and training, collaborators and their involvement in the project, and commitment to a career in an aging discipline (Maximum 2 pages);
4. A rigorous proposal describing the research that the applicant plans to undertake, including a problem statement, theoretical perspective, detailed methods, analysis plan, and potential significance to aging research. The importance of the research to the field of gerontology or geriatric medicine must be articulated. The proposal should begin with an abstract of no more than 250 words, double-spaced. The full proposal should be a maximum length of 10 pages, including the abstract and references, double-spaced (Microsoft word or compatible format, minimum 12 point font size, one inch margins/header/footer, and no appendices). The proposal should explicitly describe the study design, hypothesis if appropriate, methodology, feasibility of the study, expected outcomes, and potential for future external funding for pilot and other ongoing research initiatives. A detailed research timetable, beginning July 1 and ending June 30 must also be included. See "Suggestions on How to Improve the Quality of the Proposal" below;
5. Graduate student applicants must provide a signed letter from a faculty mentor (not necessarily a gerontologist) describing:
 - The mentor's past association with the student;
 - The mentor's plan for supervision of the student's research activities and adherence to the study timetable;
 - The mentor's support for the student as a potential awardee and additional comments regarding student's character and propensity to become an aging scholar.
6. For faculty applicants, one letter of support from a colleague who is familiar with the applicant and their research area and can attest to the importance of the study. Co-Investigators cannot provide letters of support. The Advisory Committee reserves the right to contact the references for additional information;

7. A detailed budget and budget justification for the twelve months of the award, specifically describing how the funds will be allocated;

8. When more than one investigator is listed in the application, the first individual named will be the person with whom the Advisory Committee will communicate and the investigator who will assume responsibility for conducting the research.

SELECTION PROCESS

Each application will be initially reviewed by two members of the Advisory Committee who disclose no conflicts of interest with the investigator(s). Applications deemed complete will be presented by the primary reviewer during the Advisory Committee Meeting in April for additional review and discussion. Content experts may be called upon to assist Committee Members in the review process, as appropriate. Those applicants selected as awardees will be notified by May 1 with awards effective July 1.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Awardees will be required to sign an award acceptance/agreement letter prior to disbursement of any funds from the endowment. A one-page progress report must be submitted no later than December 31 to update the Advisory Committee on the status of completion of project goals, circumstances that might adversely affect their ability to complete the project, and plans for resolution of any problems that arise during the initial conduct of the research. Awardees are encouraged to contact the Advisory Committee at any time during the grant cycle to seek advice, if needed. The Advisory Committee reserves the right to withdraw funding if the awardee is not demonstrating appropriate progress. A final summary report will be due within three months following the end of the award period, unless an extension is approved by the Advisory Committee. The final report should include a brief description of the project; the key findings of the project to date; future plans related to the project, including publications and external grant submissions; and a brief description of how this funding has helped you advance your scholarship plans or careers in aging. The summary should be approximately two pages long. Publications and presentations derived from the research project must cite funding from the Pearl J. Aldrich Endowment in Aging-Related Research.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

IRB approval of the proposed project is required as a condition of funding. If IRB approval is pending, investigators are still encouraged to apply. Endowment awardees are required to submit proof of IRB approval or exemption by the funding date or not later than two months after the funding date for the proposal award to continue. Any awarded proposal that fails to comply with this requirement will be subject to withdrawal of funding. If funding is awarded as a result of an application, the applicant becomes a grantee and assumes any and all legal and financial accountability for the awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activities. Deliberate withholding, falsification, or misrepresentation of information in the application could result in administrative actions including, but not limited to, withdrawal of the application.

University-based investigators/project staff involved in a human subject research project who will have contact with human subjects or their identifiable data must have current human research subject protection training or a refresher completed prior to the expiration date. An MSU IRB tutorial is also required. See <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/requiredtraining.html> for further details. Non-university based investigators and their project staff must abide by their institutional regulations and policies regarding human research subject protection training. Fulfillment of this obligation is strongly recommended prior to submission of the project proposal to the IRB. Investigators using animals for research projects must adhere to all federal and state policies and regulations regarding animal welfare and human care and use of laboratory animals. See <http://www.animalresources.msu.edu/regulations.html> for further details.

CHECKLIST

Follow instructions and page/pagination limits carefully
Applicant Data Sheet
Curriculum Vitae or Resume
Letter from applicant
Research proposal (including abstract and references)
IRB file number from responsible organization
Letter of support for faculty applicants
Mentor letter for graduate student applicants
Budget and budget narrative
Final proofread and spell-check
Deadline for applications: 11:59 PM on May 8, 2016

CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions regarding the Pearl Aldrich Graduate Student and Faculty Research Awards may be directed to Dr. Kevin T. Foley, Advisory Committee Chairperson, 517-884-0446 or kevin.foley@hc.msu.edu.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PROPOSAL

1. Purpose of the Study:
State clearly the purpose of the study, including how the project makes an original contribution to aging research.
2. Significance:
Provide the background of your proposal. Critically evaluate existing knowledge. Specify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance of the research in terms of the contribution to gerontology/geriatric medicine and potential for leading to further research methodology or theory development.

3. **Specific Aims/Hypothesis:**
State concisely what the research described is intended to accomplish and/or what hypothesis (es) is (are) to be tested.
4. **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework or Rationale:**
Summarize the theoretical framework or rationale as appropriate, addressing the relationship among the specific aims, the literature, key concepts, variables, and instruments.
5. **Literature Review:**
Literature may be reviewed as a separate section or as part of background, significance, and/or conceptual framework. Include current literature that is directly pertinent to the project and that assists in clarification of purpose and procedures.
6. **Methods:**
Discuss in detail the methodological approach, the research design, and the procedure to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Describe new methodology. Discuss potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.
 - a. **Research Design:**
Describe the design of the research.
 - b. **Subjects and Setting:**
Describe the target population and characteristics of the subjects. Include the number of subjects, the rationale for sample size, the sampling frame, the sampling procedure, and the setting for data collection.
 - c. **Apparatus and/or instruments:**
Report the specific characteristics of the instruments, including their reliability, validity, and/or sensitivity. Address how the tool will be used. The instrument(s) (e.g., a questionnaire) described or listed in the references.
 - d. **Procedure:**
Describe the design and the procedure to be used for the proposed data collection. Specify the kinds of data you expect to obtain. Give details of client/subject selection and intervention, if one is involved. If appropriate, discuss potential problems with and/or limitation of the procedures. Discuss in detail any procedure, situation, and/or material in your proposed research that may be hazardous to subjects. Indicate precautions to be exercised. Include an orientation plan for data collectors, if appropriate.
 - e. **Plan for Data Management/Analysis:**
Describe the means by which the data will be merged, analyzed, and/or interpreted.

- f. Limitations:
Describe the limitations of the study including those related to design and methods

- 7. Time Frame:
Provide a 12-month schedule that specifies the timing of the main steps of the investigation. Justify that the project can be completed within the time frame.

- 8. Facilities/Resources:
Describe the facilities and other physical resources available for this study (e.g., laboratories, clinical resources, office space, etc.)

- 9. Collaborative Arrangements:
If the proposed research requires collaboration with other institutions, describe the nature of collaboration and provide evidence to the reviewers that those institutions are willing to cooperate.

- 10. Consultative Support:
Include a description of availability of adequate consultation to assure refinement and completion of the project