Date: March 18th, 2019

To: Northwestern University Department Chairs, Division Chiefs, Center and Institute Directors, and Faculty

From: Richard Pope, MD, Solovy/Arthritis Research Society Professor, Division of Medicine-Rheumatology and Director, NUCATS Institute KL2 Program

Donald M. Lloyd-Jones, MD ScM FACC FAHA, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical & Translational Research, Director, Northwestern University Clinical & Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute

Re: Request for Applications for NUCATS Institute Multidisciplinary Mentored Career Development Program (KL2)

Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute is pleased to announce a Request for Applications for the Multidisciplinary Mentored Career Development Program (KL2). The KL2 Program is funded as part of the NUCATS Institute Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) which is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences at the National Institutes of Health. Please see key deadlines below:

- **RFA Release**: March 18th, 2019
- **Letter of Intent Due**: April 28th, 2019
  - If a potential applicant misses the letter of intent due date, they should contact the KL2 program staff at lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu as soon as possible to still be considered for a full application.
- **Applications Due**: June 9th, 2019
- **Funds Available**: Mid to Late Summer 2019

**Please note**: The KL2 Program is currently in a competitive grant renewal cycle. We have received a favorable score, and we anticipate that renewal funding will start in late summer 2019. We are soliciting applications now so that we are positioned to move forward with reviews as soon as possible after receiving final confirmation of funding. The funding of successful applicants is contingent on receiving the award from the NIH.

Please refer to the RFA beginning on the next page or the KL2 website for program description, eligibility and application instructions.
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I. Introduction

The KL2 Program is an important focus of the NUCATS Institute and is funded as part of the NUCATS Institute Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). The CTSA award is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the National Institutes of Health. NCATS was established in December 2011 to transform the translational science process so that new treatments and cures for disease can be delivered to patients faster.

The overall objective of the KL2 Program is to train a diverse workforce of investigators needed to drive future innovation and implement effective clinical and translational research. In order to accomplish this objective, the KL2 program offers programs with robust mentoring teams to assess the educational needs of the individual scholars and to provide them with optimal, personalized career development opportunities. In addition, the KL2 provides career development resources including formal coursework, peer mentoring and career guidance to scholars across disparate areas of expertise. The program integrates collaboration, training and resources to scholars including workshops on team science, community stakeholder engagement, mentor development and career development as well as opportunities for research experiences in academia, government and industry and externships at other local CTSA institutions.

II. Overview

The KL2 program accepts applications from junior faculty members who are pursuing a clinical and translational science research career and wish to receive additional mentored research experience. The award is open to individuals with doctoral level degrees, including but not limited to PhD, MD, DO or degrees, pursuing additional training in clinical and translational research. Scholars for the KL2 program are accepted from a wide array of specialties, departments, schools and partner institutions across Northwestern University.

The KL2 program provides support for up to two years, and submitted applications should cover a training period of two years. The two-year training must include both mentored research and plans for other research career development activities. Individuals who are funded by this mechanism will receive assistance in applying for other research career development awards or other independent grants during the period of this award. It is expected that appointed scholars will have made significant progress toward the submission of an individual K award application or an R01 or equivalent grant by the end of the first year of funding.

Junior investigators in the KL2 program will participate in an integrated didactic and mentored research program overseen by the KL2 Executive Leadership Committee (ELC). The ELC has been constituted to include members from diverse backgrounds to ensure that all areas represented by NUCATS have input into the decisions of the KL2 program, including the selection of scholars and their areas of career development, the development and monitoring of the Individual Career Advancement Plans (ICAPs), and the identification of novel opportunities and approaches to career development. The ELC includes several experienced investigators and mentors as well as young investigators and developing mentors. The ELC is chaired by KL2 Program Principal Investigator, Dr. Richard Pope.
III. Eligibility & Exclusions

Northwestern University and the KL2 program are committed to identifying and implementing ways to create and support a diverse and inclusive campus community. Scholars from diverse backgrounds and life experiences bring different perspectives, creativity, and individual enterprise to address complex scientific problems. Individuals belonging to groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences (e.g., certain racial, ethnic and gender minorities and individuals with disabilities) are strongly encouraged to apply to this program.

The eligibility and exclusion criteria are summarized below, but are similar to those listed for the K23 career development award.

Applicants to the NUCATS KL2 Mentored Career Development award must:

- Work with patients, patient materials or patient data in a clinical or translational project.
- Hold a research or health-professional doctoral degree or its equivalent, including but not limited to MD, DO, and PhD. Candidates from Northwestern University, including those from outside the Feinberg School of Medicine are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Have a full-time faculty appointment at the time of being awarded, and this must be documented in the letter of support from the Department Chair.
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Commit 75% effort to the KL2 program (or 50% for surgeons or other procedure intensive specialties requiring 50% direct patient care time to maintain skills. Please inquire at lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu for additional information).
- Have mentors with sufficient independent research support to cover the costs of the proposed research project in excess of the allowable costs of the KL2. The use of mentoring teams including co-mentors to achieve the goals of the program is strongly encouraged.
- Not be or have been a PI on an NIH R01 or equivalent PHS or non-PHS peer reviewed research grants that are over $100,000 direct costs per year, or project leaders on sub-projects of program project (P01) or center grants (P50). NOTE: Those who have been on NIH Small Grants (R03) or Exploratory/Developmental (R21) grants or their equivalents are still eligible to apply.
- Not have or had any other career development award, K01, K07, K08, K22, K23, K25) pending at the time of the KL2 review.

IV. Provisions of the Award

The award provides a number of tangible resources to support the career development of junior faculty who are fully committed to a career in clinical research. Some of these provisions include:

- % Effort: The KL2 protects 75% of a scholar’s full-time professional effort for the training and clinical research activities. This is based on the entire amount of time worked in a typical week. The remaining 25% effort can be divided among other clinical, administrative, and teaching responsibilities.
- Salary: Sources of salary support for the 75% effort include NUCATS KL2 funds of up to $100,000 per year. The department must cover the difference, if any, between
the available $100,000 and 75% of the scholar’s salary. Please refer to Section XI for additional information about NIH policy on receiving concurrent support.

- **Travel**: Up to $2,500 per year is provided to scholars to attend the Association of Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) Conference held in Washington, D.C. or an alternative conference approved by the KL2 Program Director. Travel costs will include: scholar registration, airfare, hotel, and associated transportation (to and from airport, tolls, parking), meals and incidentals. Domestic travel to additional conferences beyond what is supported by the $2,500 may be budgeted within the Research and Development Support (see below). Foreign travel may not be charged on this award.

- **Research and Development Support**: Up to $35,000 is available per year to support research expenses, such as supplies, equipment and technical personnel. **Up to $10,000** per year of these funds are available to support associated laboratory or research-related expenses for the scholar’s primary mentor. Awarded funds intended to support the scholar’s Research and Development activities may not be used to provide additional KL2 scholar salary support.

- **Tuition**: Funds are available by request for scholars to take courses in the Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) program or other associated Feinberg School of Medicine graduate programs. Scholars in the KL2 program will be encouraged to participate in courses to supplement their current knowledge and expertise in clinical and translational research as part of the Individual Career Advancement Plan process and in consultation with their mentoring teams.

- **Research Analysis and design Methods Program (RAMP) Mentor Support**: One or two RAMP mentors are assigned to each KL2 scholar to provide individualized, hands-on and educational mentorship throughout the two year award in the areas of biostatistics, epidemiology, bioinformatics, qualitative research methods and health services research. This support is included as part of the award and RAMP mentor effort does not need to be accounted for in the individual budget of each scholar.

- **Commitment by Scholar’s department**: The department agrees to release the funded scholar for the following activities, which are included in the scholar’s 75% (or 50%) effort:
  - KL2 Orientation bootcamp at the beginning of the scholar’s appointment period
  - Semi-annual KL2 progress meetings
  - Twice-monthly career development meetings while on the KL2 award or if subsequently awarded an individual K award.
  - Responsible Conduct of Research Training in cases where the RCR requirement has not already been met.

V. **Reporting and Evaluation**

- **Reporting Requirements**: Scholars and their mentors are required to provide semi-annual updates on the scholar’s research and career development progress as well as complete annual reports for the KL2 Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) submitted to NCATS. Scholars also agree to complete annual RPPR requests for 15 years after completion of their KL2.

- **Linking and Citing the KL2 Award**: Scholars must link their publication to their KL2 in PubMed and cite the KL2 on their publications. Instructions will be provided upon appointment to the award.

- **Human Subjects Approval**: The KL2 program is required to comply with the NCATS policy regarding research involving human subjects. KL2 projects
involving human subjects are required to secure approval from NCATS before funds can be released and project work can begin. Detailed information and instructions for obtaining approval will be sent to KL2 finalists. Please be aware that the NCATS prior approval process takes a minimum of 30 days assuming there is an approved NU IRB Protocol.

VI. Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be employed to evaluate the submitted proposals. Please take this into account while preparing the proposal.

NIH scoring criteria will be used to evaluate proposals. Each of the following criteria will be evaluated using a nine-point score:

- Overall Impact
- Candidate
- Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring
- Research Plan
- Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)
- Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate
VII. Proposal Instructions Overview

Please note: The KL2 Program is currently in a competitive grant renewal cycle. We have received a favorable score, and we anticipate that renewal funding will start in late summer 2019. We are soliciting applications now so that we are positioned to move forward with reviews as soon as possible after receiving final confirmation of funding. The funding of successful applicants is contingent on receiving the award from the NIH.

Feinberg School of Medicine and other Northwestern University investigators should work with their department or division research administrator to submit this internal award. This submission does not need to go through the Office of Sponsored Research.

Lurie Children’s investigators should work with the Office of Sponsored Programs to submit their application. Investigators must complete internal routing and address budget questions to the LCH Office of Sponsored Programs (staff listing).

- **Sunday, April 28th, 2019 – Letter of Intent Due (By 11:59pm)**
  - Complete the KL2 Applicant & Proposal Information Form (serves as the letter of intent). This form will capture applicant data and proposal information including the project summary/abstract.
    - When writing the Project Summary/Abstract, follow NIH Guidelines (page 3) and do not exceed 30 lines.
    - There will be an opportunity to update the information in this form before submitting the full application, in the event details change.

- **Sunday, June 9th, 2019 – Full Application Due (By 11:59pm)**
  - Applications are completed through NITRO Competitions. Applicants must create a myNUCATS account in order to view the KL2 Award application in NITRO Competitions. Registration can be completed in 60 seconds at no cost.
  - Full applications must include:
    - Biosketches for the applicant and the applicant’s primary mentor
    - First page of the PHS398
    - Specific Aims (1 page limit)
    - Proposal (8 page total limit)
      - Candidate’s Background (1 page limit)
      - Career Goals and Objectives (1 page limit)
      - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring (2 page limit)
      - Research Strategy (4 page limit)
    - Letters of Support from the applicant’s:
      - Department Chair & Division Chief (Required, can be joint letter)
      - Primary mentor (Required)
      - Co-mentors, consultants and contributors as appropriate (optional, but encouraged)
    - Budget & Budget Justification outlining the use of award funds for a period of two years.
VIII. Detailed Proposal Instructions

Please note: The KL2 Program is currently in a competitive grant renewal cycle. We have received a favorable score, and we anticipate that renewal funding will start in late summer 2019. We are soliciting applications now so that we are positioned to move forward with reviews as soon as possible after receiving final confirmation of funding. The funding of successful applicants is contingent on receiving the award from the NIH.

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- Sunday, April 28th, 2019 – Letter of Intent Due (By 11:59pm)
  - Complete the KL2 Applicant & Proposal Information Form (serves as the letter of intent). This form will capture applicant data and proposal information including the project summary/abstract.
    - Applicants may save and return to this form to complete or adjust their responses at any time, by entering the provided return code. If the return code is lost, contact lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu
    - When writing the Project Summary/Abstract, follow NIH Guidelines (page 3) and do not exceed 30 lines.
    - There will be an opportunity to update the information in this form information submitting the full application, in the event details change.

- Sunday, June 9th, 2019 – Full Application Due (By 11:59pm)
  - Applications are completed through NITRO Competitions.
    - Applicants must create a myNUCATS account in order to view the KL2 Award application in NITRO Competitions. Registration can be completed in 60 seconds at no cost.
    - Technical support for submissions in NITRO Competitions can be reached at: competitions@northwestern.edu
  - The Full Application consists of five sections completed in NITRO Competitions:
    - Investigator Profile Information
      - Complete the online form.
      - Upload the Scholar biosketch.
        - Must include eRA Commons Username
        - Please use updated NIH Biosketch format.
          - Review Galter Library Tutorials
          - Attend a Galter Library Class
    - Title Page - Complete the online form
    - Application Document (combined .pdf document uploaded to the application). Must include:
      - First Page of PHS398
      - Specific Aims (1 page limit)
• **Proposal** (8 page total limit)
  - Candidate’s Background (1 page limit)
  - Career Goals and Objectives (1 page limit)
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring (2 page limit)
  - Research Strategy (4 page limit)
    - Please include information on your current community research activities and plans for research dissemination. While this is not a review criteria for the KL2, community engagement is supported in the award. For information on community-engaged research, please visit the [Center for Community Health](#) website.

• **Primary Mentor Biosketch** (follow same instructions as Scholar Biosketch)

• **Letters of Support**: Letters should document the role of the mentor in the career development of the scholar and how the work proposed fits into the overall program funded by the mentor.
  - Department Chair & Division Chair (Required, can be a shared letter)
  - Primary Mentor (Required)
  - Co-Mentors, Consultants and Contributors (Optional).
    - Scholars are expected to work as part of multidisciplinary teams and support from a secondary mentor is **strongly encouraged**.

• **Budget**
  - Read the [KL2 Budget & Budget Justification Information](#)
  - Complete the [KL2 Budget Template](#).
  - Upload the completed budget in NITRO Competitions.

• **Budget Justification**
  - Complete the [KL2 Budget Justification Template](#).
  - Upload the completed Budget Justification in NITRO Competitions.

• **Update KL2 Applicant & Proposal Information before final proposal submission**
  - Applicants should review the information submitted in the KL2 Applicant & Proposals Information form and make updates as needed. (Instructions on how to access this information will be provided upon submission of the form).
  - Submit final version by 11:59pm on Sunday, June 9th, 2019
IX. Important Dates

- Request for Applications: March 18th, 2019
- Letter of Intent Due: April 28th, 2019
- Full Application Due: June 9th, 2019
- Review Panel Convenes: Mid to Late Summer 2019
- Interviews Finalists & Mentors: Mid to Late Summer 2019
  - Finalists identified by the Review Panel will participate in a final presentation and be required to attend this meeting with their primary mentor. Finalists selected will give a 15-minute presentation and Q&A on their research and design including topics such as the primary research question, rationale, preliminary data, translational nature of the research and future research plans.
- Initial Notification of Decisions: Late Summer 2019
- Award Begins: Late Summer 2019

Please note: The KL2 Program is currently in a competitive grant renewal cycle. We have received a favorable score, and we anticipate that renewal funding will start in late summer 2019. We are soliciting applications now so that we are positioned to move forward with reviews as soon as possible after receiving final confirmation of funding. The funding of successful applicants is contingent on receiving the award from the NIH.

X. Contacts for Application Support

- Support with Preparing and Submitting your Application
  - Feinberg School of Medicine and other Northwestern University investigators should work with their department or division research administrator to submit this internal award. This submission does not need to go through the Office of Sponsored Research.
  - Lurie Children’s investigators should work with the Office of Sponsored Programs to submit their application. Investigators must complete internal routing and address budget questions to the LCH Office of Sponsored Programs (staff listing).

- Qualification/Eligibility Questions
  - Richard Pope, MD, KL2 Program Director, 312-503-8000, rmp158@northwestern.edu

- KL2 Application Process questions:
  - Lauren Daniels, Sr. Program Coordinator, 312-503-3284, lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu

- NITROCompetitions: Technical Support: competitions@northwestern.edu

XI. Useful Links

- NIH Policy regarding human subjects research prior approval: https://ncats.nih.gov/ctsa/funding/prior-approval-faq


• NIH Biosketch Format: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm


• National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS): https://ncats.nih.gov/

• Northwestern University Institutional Review Board: https://irb.northwestern.edu/

• NUCATS Website: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/

• NUCATS KL2 Website: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/education-and-career-development/career-development-awards/kl2/index.html

• NUCATS BERD/RAMP Core: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/about/centers-and-programs/biostatics-epidemiology-research-and-design.html

• NUCATS Center for Community Health: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/about/centers-and-programs/center-for-community-health.html

• KL2 Applicant & Proposal Information: https://redcap.nubic.northwestern.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=3PAERHTNPE

• myNUCATS Membership: https://membership.nucats.northwestern.edu/about/mynucats

• NITRO Competitions: https://grants.nubic.northwestern.edu/sign-in

• KL2 Budget & Budget Justification & Information: https://northwestern.box.com/s/b2wu0tnoeppskJcpn9ng3e5bngos6cj

• KL2 Budget Template: https://northwestern.box.com/s/45a4jd9crfngnmw8g803ewereylce0w

• KL2 Budget Justification template https://northwestern.box.com/s/cv7zuq6iajymzyfww7xy9aolcply69

• Lurie Children’s Hospital Office of Sponsored Program: https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/research/management/sponsored-programs/