Duke Center for Geriatric Surgery Scholars Program
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
Application Deadline: October 18, 2021

The Duke Center for Geriatric Surgery (DCGS) is envisioned to be a collaborative platform to develop and integrate advances in perioperative care for older adults through clinical innovation, education and research. The DCGS builds on the success of current programs, namely, Perioperative Senior Health Clinic (POSH), Health Optimization Program for Elders (HOPE), Educational Leadership Immersion Training in ELDERcare (ELITE), and Surgical Center for Outcomes Research (Duke SCORES).

I. Purpose
The Duke Center for Geriatric Surgery is a multidisciplinary, inter professional center supporting advances in perioperative care for older adults through clinical innovation, education and research to further its aims of enhancing clinical care and health professions education in geriatric specific issues that are critical in the perioperative period. DCGS advocates for patient and family centered care and will help guide policy that affects Medicare decision making and payment reform in the perioperative period. DCGS supports clinical and basic research in enhancing surgical outcomes in older adults.

The DCGS Scholars Program provides funding of up to $20,000 per project for 12 months to catalyze investigations of key questions in geriatric surgical outcomes research. The goals of this program are to foster new collaborations among Duke researchers, support research teams in obtaining preliminary data that will be used to apply for larger awards, and provide opportunities for mentoring and training for junior faculty, residents and medical students. Applicants will be expected to collaborate with available biostatistical support resources and to engage with the DCGS program.

II. Key Dates
- Application Submission Deadline: October 18, (5:00pm ET)
- Application Review: early-mid November
- Awards Announced: Late November
- Funding Period: January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 (12 months)

III. Eligibility
The Principal Investigator (PI) must be at the regular rank Assistant, Associate, or Professor level at Duke University. Both MD and non-MD faculty may be Principal Investigators.

Co-investigators: The project must include one co-investigator from the Division of Surgical Disciplines and one from either the Division of Geriatric Medicine (Department of Medicine) or the Duke Center for Aging and Human Development.

Preference will be given to applications that include junior faculty members and/or trainees. PIs are required to collaborate with biostatisticians regarding project development. To begin this collaboration, submit a request through this website, https://bit.ly/SSD-BiostatsSupport, and indicate that you are submitting an
application for the DCGS Scholars Program.

The proposed project should be innovative, impactful, and should have the potential to attract significant interest for external funding. Basic science, translational or health services research projects are encouraged. Successful applicants will be expected to work toward major milestones that will facilitate submission of grant proposals to external funding agencies. Applicants must clearly identify relevant funding opportunities that will be targeted with future applications for external funding based on successful completion of DCGS Scholars projects.

Faculty members may not serve as PI on more than one concurrently funded DCGS pilot award.

IV. Funding

Each award will consist of up to $20,000 (direct costs only; see budget guidelines) with an expected start date of January 1, 2022 and ending no later than October 31, 2022. One award will be funded during this award cycle. Requests for no-cost extensions will not be approved. DCGS Scholars awardees will each collaborate with a faculty member from the DCGS Steering Committee, who will facilitate access to DCGS resources and serve as a key contact person for the program.

TWO KEYS AREAS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR THIS RFA are:

Physical function and resilience in aging:
- Evaluation and measurement of physical function and resilience in the perioperative period
- Effect of surgery on physical resilience and function
- Targeted perioperative interventions to preserve and/or enhance resiliency and promote healthy aging.

Community engagement in the perioperative period:
- Working with community-based organizations to address social drivers of health
- Working with home health agencies, assisted living facilities, skilled nursing facilities, PACE or other services to improve transitions in care
- Effect of community engagement on health outcomes, utilization, or costs after surgery

Selection Process and Review Criteria

Application Submission: The DCGS Scholars Review Committee will perform a detailed review of the applications and select the finalists.

The Review Committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing and scoring applications:
- Significance – The project MUST address an important problem or barrier to progress in the field and be directed toward the attainment of scientific knowledge or technical capability that can change or improve clinical practice. Please note that the subject MUST be sufficiently meaningful and require a depth of analysis to be viewed as a catalyst for larger projects. Applicants should articulate plans for future study and define how this pilot work will be used to develop externally funded projects, including explicit identification of targeted federal RFAs, PAs or other funding opportunities.
- Innovation – The research challenges or seeks to shift current clinical practice. Concepts, approaches or...
methodologies should be novel to the field or novel in a broad sense.

- The project proposes to pursue research questions that can best be answered through health services research methods.
- Statistical collaboration – The project includes an estimate of a statistician’s effort that is appropriate for the work proposed.
- Mentoring – The project includes participation from junior faculty members, fellows, residents, medical students and/or trainees.
- Approach – Methods and analyses used are well-reasoned and suitable to accomplish the specific aims of the proposal.
- Feasibility – Project scope of work is appropriate for the timeframe and level of funding.
- There is potential for independent external funding with data provided by this award.

V. Application Procedure
All materials should be combined in a single PDF file and emailed to theresa.champion@duke.edu no later than 5 p.m. on October 18, 2021. Surgery Research Development will offer proposal development assistance for the DCGS Scholars program. To schedule a consultation, contact Theresa Champion at theresa.champion@duke.edu.

The required application sections are:
1. **Scientific Abstract**: Proposal summary for use by review committee members (maximum 30 lines of text)
2. **Specific Aims**: NIH-style format, half-inch margins, 11-point font (maximum 1 page)
3. **Research Strategy**: NIH-style format, half-inch margins, 11-point font (minimum 3 pages, maximum 5 pages, including tables and figures). Please include the following labeled sections:
   - Significance
   - Innovation
   - Approach
   - Plan for Application for External Funding
   - Table of Activities and Quarterly Milestones to be Achieved
4. **References Cited**: no page limit
5. **Budget and Budget Justification**: use PHS 398 Form Pages 4 and 5.
6. **NIH-format biographical sketches**: include bio sketches for all key members of the research team using the current NIH format (5 page maximum per individual).
7. **Letter of Collaboration**: Provide a letter of commitment from each proposed collaborator, including the lead biostatistical collaborator.

VI. Budget Guidelines
1. The budget period is January 1st, 2022 – December 31st, 2022 (12 months). The award does not include indirect or overhead costs.
2. Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator effort will not be paid by this award. The award is designed to provide funding for technical support, research staff, and purchase of data.
3. Grant funds may be used for:
• Salary support for technical staff and research support personnel
• Programming support, including technical staff
• Travel necessary to perform the research
• Data/software purchase
• Conference travel for dissemination of results (limit $1000 per application)
• Manuscript preparation and submission (limit $500 per application)
• Other purposes deemed necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project

4. Grant funds may not be used for:
• Effort for PI or Co-Investigators
• Capital equipment
• Office supplies or communication costs, including printing
• Professional education or training
• Computers or audiovisual equipment
• Indirect costs

Awarded funds must be used to conduct the work proposed. DCGS reserves the right to revoke funding in the event it is determined that funds were not spent in accordance with the approved proposal.

VII. Terms of the Award
A. Participation Requirements
Each Principal Investigator agrees to actively participate in DCGS didactic sessions and other events. At minimum, this includes:
• Monthly meetings with DCGS-affiliated biostatisticians engaged in project development, including co-authorship of publications with DCGS-affiliated biostatisticians.
• Monthly meetings with DCGS faculty engaged in facilitating completion of grant proposal.
• Attendance and presentations at didactic and Research-in-Progress sessions as well as other DCGS events.

B. Post-Award Reporting
Each Principal Investigator agrees to submit a brief written progress report to the DCGS Scholars Committee 6 months following the award start date. Within 3 months following completion of the 12-month award, each Principal Investigator agrees to provide a brief final written report and present the findings of their work to the group. Awardees also agree to provide a written update to the committee one year following completion of the award detailing grants applied for and received as a result of DCGS Scholars funding. Awardees are also expected to serve as reviewers for future DCGS funding opportunities. All publications arising from this award must acknowledge Duke Center for Geriatric Surgery.

MORE INFORMATION
For additional information on this funding opportunity, please contact Theresa Champion, SCORES & DCGS Program Coordinator, at theresa.champion@duke.edu