

T32 Clinic: How to Effectively Respond to a T32 Summary Statement

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Subcommittee F True Confessions



The Low-Down on Subcommittee F Part 1

1. Basic Science T32s are a small part of what is reviewed.
2. Subcommittee F is a motley crew.

What is the group dynamic like?

How do population scientists and clinicians view a basic science T32?

Is that view different from "us"?

How/Should this impact the writing of a T32 application?

The Low-Down on Subcommittee F Part 2

1. T32 Program Plan is 25 pages.
2. There are 8 sets of Tables, some with an A, B, C
3. "Average" assignment: 5-6 applications (311-1376 pages)

Do reviewers really read everything and look at every table?
(C'mon...be honest)

In any case,

what are the most important parts of the application?

what about those tables?

How/Should this impact the writing of a T32 application?

How do I make sure I don't annoy the reviewers?

Training Faculty

SUMMARY STATEMENT
(Privileged Communication) Release Date: 11/04/2014

PROGRAM CONTACT:
Susan Lim
240-276-5630
slms@mail.nih.gov

Application Number: 2 T32 CA075207-16A1

Principal Investigator
AARONSON, STUART A MD
Applicant Organization: ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI
Review Group: NCI-F
Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education
Institutional Training and Education

Meeting Date: 10/29/2014 RFA/PA: PA14-015
Council: JAN 2015 PCC: WTR
Requested Start: 04/01/2015

Next Steps: visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/next_steps.htm
Human Subjects: 10-No human subjects involved
Animal Subjects: 10-No live vertebrate animals involved for competing appl.

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	Estimated Total Cost
16	811,228	853,257
17	645,633	694,119
18	707,772	758,250
19	784,984	817,280
20	780,448	812,638
TOTAL	3,490,976	3,733,788

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET NOTE: The budget shown is the requested budget and has not been adjusted to reflect any recommendations made by reviewers. If an award is planned, the costs will be calculated by Institute grants management staff based on the recommendations outlined below in the COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS section.

Weaknesses

- There is no indication of how the program handles junior faculty who will have little or no training experience.

Should there be a mentorship program for junior faculty?

What are the criteria for being on the Training Faculty (aside from the obvious R01 funding issue)?

Should there be a mechanism to remove faculty from the Program?

The F Problem

Weaknesses

- The training program does not appear to require trainees to submit F-type individual training grant applications.

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AARONSON, STUART A MD

Applicant Organization: ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI

Review Group: NCI-F
Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education
Institutional Training and Education

Meeting Date: 10/20/2014 RFA/PA: PA14-015
Funding Opportunity Number: 5Y4-CA14015-01

Project Title: Training Program in Cancer Biology

SRG Action: Impact Score: 30
Next Steps: Visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/next_steps.htm

Human Subjects: 10-No human subjects involved
Animal Subjects: 10-No live vertebrate animals involved for competing appl.

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	Estimated Total Cost
16	811,328	853,287
17	849,538	894,119
18	707,772	756,350
19	784,894	817,393
20	780,446	812,639
TOTAL	3,493,978	3,733,788

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Should all trainees apply for F awards?
Should this be a requirement?

If a trainee is on a T32, will that influence the ability to get an F award?
(since the F study section will consider them too advanced?)

Program Elements versus Benchmarks of Success

Principal Investigator

Overall Impact: The [redacted] is a top research institution, with historically important scientific contributions. Record of training in basic field of cancer research is strong (more than 2 decades). The faculty is well funded and focused on important cancer problems. However, it is not adequately explained why this well funded private institution needs an additional support and how would loss of the T32 impact training and research at the [redacted].

Project Title: Training Program in Cancer Biology

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	
18	707,772	700,000
19	764,894	817,393
20	760,446	812,639
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A training program versus a collection of trainees?

Trainees are exceptionally productive and get great jobs (See Tables), but probably would have done that even without the "Program" (See Research Plan).

Should they be funded?

What is the relative importance of Tables versus Plan?

Distinguishing T32 Trainees From Everybody Else

Weaknesses

- There appears to be no formal instruction for postdoctoral trainees.

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Principal Investigator
AARONSON, STUART A MD

Applicant Organization: ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI

Review Group: NCI-F
Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education
Institutional Training and Education

Meeting Date: 10/20/2014 RFA/PA: PA14-015
Start Date: JAN 2015 PI: W9TR

SRG Action: Impact Score: 30
Next Steps: Visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/next_steps.htm

Human Subjects: 10-No human subjects involved
Animal Subjects: 10-No live vertebrate animals involved for competing appl.

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	Estimated Total Cost
16	611,325	653,297
17	648,532	694,119
18	707,772	756,350
19	784,894	817,393
20	780,446	812,639
TOTAL	3,493,978	3,733,798

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Should there be a curriculum for postdocs?
Should it be required?

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RFA/PA: PA14-015
 PCC: W9TR

Project Title: Training Program in Cancer Biology
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Weaknesses

- There is not a clear or unique cancer theme for this training program from the list of preceptors. Thus, this program does not distinguish itself as to having a special cancer focused niche.

Weaknesses

- Basic approach is not particularly innovative, in that there is no distinct or unique approach to training.

Is there a need for T32 specific activities?

What are considered positive ways of demonstrating value added?
 T32-sponsored symposia/seminars, other opportunities?

SUMMARY STATEMENT
(Privileged Communication) Release Date: 11/06/2014

PROGRAM CONTACT:
Susan Lim
240-276-5630
slms@mail.nih.gov

Application Number: 2 T32 CA078207-16A1

Principal Investigator
AARONSON, STUART A MD
Applicant Organization: ICAHII SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI
Review Group: NCI-F
Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education
Institutional Training and Education

Meeting Date: 10/20/2014 RFA/PA: PA14-015
Council: JAN 2015 PCC: WSTR
Requested Start: 04/01/2015

Project Title: Training Program in Cancer Biology
Next Steps: Visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/next_steps.htm
Human Subjects: 10-No human subjects involved

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	Estimated Total Cost
16	611,328	653,297
17	649,538	694,119
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Weaknesses

- The program lacks a formalized mechanism for introducing trainees to the challenges faced by clinicians treating cancer patients.

Is there a need for clinical exposure?
Should there be clinical opportunities in the T32 Program?

Program Assessment and Evaluation

Weaknesses

- It is unclear what the role of the IAB and EAB are in the program.

RESUME AND SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

...the application would have been strengthened by specific recommendations of the IAB and EAB with follow-up actions based upon those recommendations.

Weaknesses

- Assessment of progress is up to the director and the mentors. There is no independent evaluation.

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Requested Start: 04/01/2015

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Fiscal Year	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs
16	611,328	653,287
17	648,538	694,119
18	707,772	756,350
19	764,894	817,393
20	760,446	812,629
TOTAL	3,493,978	3,733,768

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Is there a requirement for advisory boards?

Both internal and external?

If so, how should their role(s) be documented in the application?

Postdoc Applicant Pool

PROGRAM CONTACT: Susan Lim 240-276-6630 lims@mail.nih.gov	SUMMARY STATEMENT (Privileged Communication)	Release Date: 11/06/2014
Principal Investigator AARONSON, STUART A MD		Application Number: 2 T32 CA079207-16A1
Applicant Organization: ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MOUNT SINAI		
Review Group: NCI-F Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education Institutional Training and Education		
Meeting Date: 10/29/2014	FEA/P#: PA14-015	
Next Steps: Visit http://grants.nih.gov/grants/next_steps.htm		
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Weaknesses

This T32 receives a total of 5 postdoctoral slots but only received a total of 31 different applicants and 11 of these were supported. The pool may be too small to justify 5 postdoctoral slots.

What is the right ratio of slots to pool size?

What is my postdoc pool:

- current postdocs with current training faculty?
- postdoc applicants to current training faculty?
- those who specifically apply to the T32 Training Program?

Enhancing Diversity: All Talk No Action

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Subcommittee F - Institutional Training and Education
Council: JAN 2015
Requested Start: 10/01/2015
Project Title: Training Program in Cancer Biology

Animal Subjects: 10-No live vertebrate animals involved for competing appl.

Project Year	Direct Costs Requested	Total Cost
6		653,297
7		694,119
18	747,772	756,350
19	764,894	817,393
20	760,446	812,639
TOTAL	3,483,978	3,733,798

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Weaknesses

The number of URM appointees is still too small. One of the 7 of 45 appointees is considered diversity as a first generation coming from Cambodia. While there is excellent prose about URM recruitment and retention there has been very little improvement. In the last 5 years very few predoctoral or postdoctoral trainees are URM. In the last review, an extra postdoc was provided exclusively for a URM. Much more work in being proactive for URM recruitment and retention is needed.

If the URM numbers are low, how much can good writing compensate?
Is it good to be introspective and acknowledge the problem?
Should "excuses" be made? If so, what is an acceptable "excuse"?

Other Questions

A reviewer claims that director lacks leadership experience - not true, and a point that needs to be highlighted in renewal application. What are they looking for?

Is there a bias against long-standing T32s?

A description of program trajectory for >20 yr T32 appears to have been expected.

What is the best and most important strategy or thing to know for older programs coming up for renewal?

16 faculty mentors were noted to be also mentors on the MSTP T32. This makes no sense, not only from the unrelated goals of the respective T32s, but because training faculty can certainly serve on multiple T32s.

BEST THING EVER
(to enhance your T32 application)

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Ad hoc on Subcommittee F

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It helps **YOU** 'cause you learn a lot

It helps **US** 'cause you ensure the review is fair

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