

**Year 2 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Distinguished Scholars Award

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

Practices to improve retention

Description of Work:

In January of 2020, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai's (ISMMS) Office of Gender Equity announced their first Distinguished Scholars Award Program, a competitive funding process that would support up to four junior faculty members with independent research programs who were also integrating family caretaking responsibilities into their careers. We based our program, which is novel to ISMMS, on the few similar programs at other academic medical centers that have shown a 20-25:1 return of investment in terms of grant funding success, and have proven to improve retention and advancement of gender diverse faculty. Rooting the program development in the evidence of other prestigious programs, and making the case that this could improve retention of diverse faculty ensured the Office of Gender Equity had buy-in from the highest levels of leadership at the school who provided funding for this opportunity.

The Office of Gender Equity released a call for proposals, inviting all Mount Sinai clinical/translational or basic scientists at the assistant professor level balancing caregiving responsibility with their independent research careers to apply. Funding was available to caregivers of all genders, and provided awardees with up to \$50,000 in funding to support the PI's research, including through a technician, study coordinator, data analyst, fellow, student, or grant writer. Awardees could not use funds to support the investigator's salary. The application included: short and long-term career goals; evidence of independence; research plans; an NIH biosketch including other support; budget and budget justification; letters of support; and a description of caregiving responsibilities.

In order to understand the program's success and learn how to improve it in future years, leadership at the Office of Gender Equity and within the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, including the Dean for the school, met with each of the scholars. In the fall of 2020, the Office of Gender Equity, revised the application process and the program to better meet the needs of future awardees based upon input from the first cohort.

In 2021, the Office of Gender Equity announced four distinguished scholars and expanded the program to include grant-writing support for three runners-up. We continue to meet with the the 2020 scholars, and the 2021 scholars, to support their careers which often includes identifying resources and senior faculty with relevant expertise.. We are connecting awardees

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to established key institutional career development resources. These includes the Mount Sinai LEAD program, and programs through the Office for Women's Careers. We are exploring opportunities for quarterly sessions on topics that frequently arise, e.g., targeted information sessions on academic promotion working with experts in our Office for Faculty Development. There are opportunities for all scholars to come together with the team from the Office of Gender Equity for support, and for peer-mentoring between cohorts of scholars. We are also working with a production company to film short videos of each scholar for their websites to effectively share their research and attract trainees to their labs.

We will continue to refine the application processes and award experience based on the feedback from our scholars, but plan to institutionalize this award for years to come.

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://icahn.mssm.edu/about/gender-equity>

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