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Hub: Medical College of Wisconsin  
Grant: TL1  
Category: Other – Increase application pool  
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We have faced two challenges with the applicant pool over the past year: a lack of applicants from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) and an inability to reliably fill our two post-doc positions. Significant advances were made over the past year in both areas.

Lack of applicants from UWM: Since the beginning of the TL1, we have had 34 graduates (up to 2021; 28 graduates up to 2020) complete the program; only three of those have been from UWM. The acceptance rate for UWM applicants is equal to that from the other two schools, but the applicant number was lower. In order to increase that applicant number, we added Lance Weinhardt PhD, Associate Dean for research for the College of Health Sciences, the Zilber School of Public Health, and the College of Nursing to our leadership team. As a result of this addition, and his work further disseminating information about the program, our most recent applicant pool included 4 of the 19 applicants from UWM, of which two were selected for inclusion. We believe that the additional

TL1 Goal: to increase the number of clinician-scientists who can lead the design and oversight of future clinical investigations critical to transforming the translational process so that new treatments and cures for disease can be delivered to patients faster

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  2) an inability to reliably fill our two post-doc positions.

- Significant advances were made over the past year in both areas.
  1) UWM Applications
     • Added an Associate Dean from UWM to the TL1 Leadership team. His work disseminating information about the program has help to increase the number of applicants from UWM
     • The most recent applicant pool of 19 included 4 from UWM; 2 were selected for the 2021-22 cohort.
  2) Post-Doc positions
     • Altered program from single year of funding to provide two years of funding for post-docs. Which allows post-docs to complete their research training and the MS in CTS program.
applicants from UWM strengthen the program both by increasing the breadth of areas of study that we will fund and because UWM has the largest number of underrepresented minorities among the three participating institutions.

Post-doc positions: Our TL1 program continues to require that all scholars are enrolled in a degree granting program. Therefore, our post-docs tend to be people who have completed medical school and are currently in a subspecialty fellowship training program. As part of the program, those scholars complete a Masters degree in Clinical and Translational Science, which requires two years. Given the increasing financial scrutiny at academic medical centers, and the exacerbation of that financial scrutiny by the COVID-19 pandemic, our previous practice of only providing a single year of funding for scholars left departments uncertain whether the second year of the Masters degree would be funded and students could therefore complete their research training.

After review by our External Advisory Committee, and learning from other TL1 program structures which frequently provide two years of funding, we have altered our program to provide two years of funding for post-docs, pending satisfactory completion of the first year. As a result, we filled both post-doc positions this current year, and those two scholars will continue for the next year ensuring that our post-doc allotment remains full. We will welcome new post-doc applications for the year following, expecting to again have two scholars.

Feedback from eligible medical school clinical departments was vital to understanding the root cause of our difficulty and in allowing us to overcome that difficulty. Having a full complement of post-docs allows us to broaden the TL1 experience for all scholars as the post-docs have vast clinical experience and force the pre-doc PhD scholars to think through the translation of their projects to a patient care endpoint.