Date: October 1, 2015

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

From: Richard Pope, MD, Chief, 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)

The Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS) is pleased to announce a call for applications for the Multidisciplinary Mentored Career Development Program (KL2). The KL2 Program is an important focus of 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. Funding for KL2 scholars selected during this award cycle will begin on April 1, 2016.

OVERVIEW:
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 team science workshops, community implementation and dissemination training, and opportunities for research experiences in academia, government and industry leveraging disparate areas of expertise. 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 MD, DO or PhD 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 **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 (see below). 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. A third year of funding may be available at the end of two years for those who have submitted an individual mentored (i.e. K23) or independent grant proposal (i.e. R21, R03 or R01) that is very competitive, but not yet funded. If the scholar has shown significant progress, including a reviewed individual K-level proposal, but has not yet achieved funding and a third year of funding is not available, it is expected that the K scholar’s department will continue to protect the scholar’s research effort for a defined period of time to protect the investment that the department and NUCATS have made in the scholar.

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 Development Plans (IDPs), and the identification of novel opportunities and approaches to career development. It 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.

The purpose of this communication is to invite KL2 scholar nominations from the Northwestern University faculty. The scholar nomination committee requests interested potential scholars provide a **letter of intent by November 1, 2015** in order to be considered during this round of proposals. Final, full applications are due **January 11, 2016**. Funding is planned to begin on or around **April 1, 2016**.

**ELIGIBILITY and EXCLUSIONS:**

The eligibility and exclusion criteria are summarized below, but are similar for those listed for the K23 career development award. Information can be found at: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-10-060.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-10-060.html).

Northwestern University and the KL2 program are committed to identifying and implementing ways to create and support a diverse and inclusive campus community. As the KL2 strives for diversity of scientific discipline, we also strive for a community of junior faculty and mentors from different backgrounds and perspectives to engage in a mutual exchange of ideas and experiences. Those belonging to groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in research education and training (e.g., certain racial and ethnic minorities and individuals with disabilities) are strongly encouraged to apply to this program.

- Applicants must work with patients, patient materials or patient data in a clinical or translational project.
- Applicants must have 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.
- Applicants must have a full-time faculty appointment within three months of being awarded, and this must be documented in the letter of support from the Department Chair.
- Only U.S. citizens or non-citizen nationals or an individual lawfully admitted for permanent residence who possess an Alien Registration Receipt Card (1-151 or 1-551) or some other verification of legal admission as a permanent resident prior to appointment, are eligible to become KL2 scholars.
• 75% of the scholar’s full-time professional effort must be devoted to the KL2 program. Exceptions available for certain clinical specialties if needed. One example might be surgical specialties requiring 50% direct patient care time to maintain surgical skills. Please inquire at nucats-ed@northwestern.edu for additional information.

• Former or current principal investigators on any NIH research project grant (this does not include NIH Small Grants (R03) or Exploratory/Developmental (R21) grants or their equivalents) or equivalent non-PHS peer reviewed research grants that are over $100,000 (e.g. American Heart Association, American Cancer Society or similar) direct costs per year, or project leaders on sub-projects of program project (P01) or center grants (P50) are NOT eligible to participate as KL2 scholars.

• Applicants who have submitted a K-level training grant application but have not received a score or summary statement may NOT submit a KL2 application that duplicates the provisions and research proposal of the submitted K-level training grant application until the funding status of that K-level award is known.

• Candidates must 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.

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:

• **Salary**: The net amount provided toward salary and fringe benefits is up to $100,000 per year. The salary should be based on a full-time, 12-month appointment and commensurate with the % effort protected by the award. Additional salary appropriate to compensating the scholar for the amount of time protected by the grant must be provided from non-Federal sources.

• **% Effort**: The departments are required to protect 75% (50% for surgeons and other procedure-intensive specialties) of the KL2 recipient’s professional time to direct toward the funded proposal.

• **Travel**: Travel expenses will be provided for scholars to attend the Association of Clinical and Translational Science (ACTS) Conference held in Washington, DC. Travel cost will include: scholar registration, airfare, hotel, and associated transportation (to and from airport, tolls, parking), meals and incidentals. Attendance at the conference provides opportunities for scholars to network nationally with other scholars, present their research, exposure to key leaders in the field including at the National Institutes of Health, and to best practices in clinical and translational science.

• **Research and Development Support**: Up to $25,000 is available per year to support research expenses, such as supplies, equipment and technical personnel. Each scholar must submit a detailed budget and budget justification for the requested expenses as part of the application process. Awarded funds intended to support the scholar’s RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT activities may not be used to additionally support the KL2 scholar’s salary.

• **Mentor Material and Supply Support**: Up to $10,000 per scholar per year is available through this award to support associated laboratory or other research-related expenses for the primary mentor of each scholar.

• **Community Mentor Support**: The KL2 program will provide scholars with connections to community mentors to support their research who have a vested interest in improving the health and well-being of Chicagoland communities and training future translational science investigators. Community mentors may support scholars in identifying the relevance of their
project to the community and ways the scholar can disseminate research findings in the community.

- **Research Analysis and design Methods Program (RAMP) Mentor Support**: 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 does not need to be accounted for in the individual budget of each scholar.
- **Tuition**: Funds are available 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, as part of the IDP process and in consultation with their mentoring teams, to participate in courses to supplement their current knowledge and expertise in clinical and translational research.
- **Supplemental Department Funds**: Departments may supplement the NIH KL2 contribution; however the supplementation may not be from federal funds unless specifically authorized by the federal program from which such funds are derived. In no case may PHS funds be used for salary supplementation. Any supplementation of salary may not require extra duties or responsibilities that would interfere with the purpose of this award.

The DEPARTMENT also agrees to the following:

- **Career Development Meetings**: The Department agrees to free the funded scholar for twice-monthly career development meetings while on the KL2 award or if subsequently awarded an individual K award.
- **Responsible Conduct of Research Training**: The Department commits to participation in the Taking Responsibility for the Responsible Conduct of Research course in cases where the RCR requirement has not already been met.
- **Individual K Submission**: It is expected that the scholar will have made significant progress towards the submission of individual K award application or an R equivalent grant by the end of the first year of funding.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL**: This proposal will use the NITRO Competitions system for applications and review. Proposal and budget development instructions (and required forms) can be found at: [http://nucats.northwestern.edu/funding/career-development-awards/kl2/proposal-budget-development-instructions](http://nucats.northwestern.edu/funding/career-development-awards/kl2/proposal-budget-development-instructions)

**November 1, 2015 – Letter of Intent Due**

- Letter of intent to apply due from the potential scholars. Letters of intent should be sent to nucats-ed@northwestern.edu. This letter should include:
  - Your name and title
  - Project Title
  - Department
  - Chair Name
  - Primary Mentor Name
  - Project Summary/Abstract
    - Do not exceed 30 lines.
- **Please note this letter is REQUIRED in order to assemble the appropriate review committee.**
January 11, 2016 – Full Applications Due

Description of Items to be Submitted:

- **KL2 Applicant Data Form**
- **First Page of PHS 398**
- Specific Aims (limit 1 page)
- Proposal (limit 8 pages) including:
  - Candidate's Background (limit 1 page)
  - Career Goals and Objectives (limit 1 page)
  - Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring (limit 2 pages)
  - Research Strategy (limit 4 pages)
    - 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 mentors are a provision of the award. For information on community-engaged research, please visit the [Center for Community Health](#) website. To set up a consultation meeting with Center for Community Health leadership, email KL2 Administrator [lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu](mailto:lauren.daniels@northwestern.edu).
- Letters of Support
  - Required Letters: Department Chair, Lead Mentor
  - Additional letters as appropriate from Co-Mentors, Consultants and Contributors
  - Scholars are expected to work as part of multidisciplinary teams and support from a secondary mentor is strongly encouraged.
  - 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.
- **Budget and Budget Justification**
  - Download KL2 Budget Template
  - Download KL2 Budget Justification Instructions and Template
  - Overall
    - Please use budget justification template provided.
    - This is an internal, institutional award and no F&A is available to departments.
    - Budgets should cover a two year award period beginning April 1, 2016.
    - Please note that the KL2 (and CTSA award) do not allow for carry-forward balances between Year 1 and Year 2.
  - Salary
    - Salary and fringes should represent 9 months (75%) of the applicant's salary up to $100,000 per year.
    - Additional salary appropriate to compensating the scholar for their remaining effort must be provided from non-Federal sources.
  - Research Development Support
    - $25,000 per scholar per year
    - Supports research expenses, supplies, equipment, and technical personnel.
    - Salary for support staff or services is permitted.
    - Funds may be used to support additional travel beyond the ACTS meeting noted in the provisions of the award section of this letter.
    - These funds may not be used to support faculty salary including the scholar salary or mentors and collaborators.
  - Tuition
• Scholars should budget for their faculty tuition benefit applied to the current TGS tuition rate per course for the number of courses essential to their career development plan.
  – Mentor Material and Supply Support
    • Scholars can budget up to $10,000 per year to support associated laboratory or other research-related expenses for their primary mentor.
    • These funds may not be used to support any salary.

• NIH Biosketches
  – Scholar and up to two mentors
  – Must include eRA Commons Username for each.
  – Class support for the new NIH biosketch from the Galter Library is available here: http://galter.northwestern.edu/course_info/204

How to Submit Proposal:
• All applicants are encouraged to contact their research administration for submission support. Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago faculty are required to contact the Office of Sponsored Programs prior to submission.
• Materials for submission should be uploaded into the NITRO Competitions located at: https://grants.nubic.northwestern.edu/welcome
• Instructions for how to navigate the NITRO Competitions system and complete uploads can be found at: http://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/funding/nitro-competitions-user-guide-applicants
• Technical support for submissions in NITRO Competitions can be reached at: competitions@northwestern.edu
• The NITROCompetitions application will be completed in six sections:

  1. Investigator Profile Information
     i. Complete the online form
     ii. Upload the Scholar biosketch

  2. Title Page
     i. Complete the online form

  3. Application Document (combined .pdf document uploaded to the application). Must include:
     a. First Page of PHS 398
     b. Specific Aims (limit 1 page)
     c. Proposal (limit 8 pages)
        1. Candidate's Background (limit 1 page)
        2. Career Goals and Objectives (limit 1 page)
        3. Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring (limit 2 pages)
        4. Research Strategy (limit 4 pages)
     d. Biosketches for Scholar and Primary Mentor
        1. Must include eRA Commons Username for each.

4. Class details for the new NIH biosketch from the Galter Library is available here: [http://galter.northwestern.edu/course_info/204](http://galter.northwestern.edu/course_info/204)

e. Letters of Support
   1. Department Chair (required)
   2. Primary Mentor (required)
   3. Co-Mentors, Consultants and Contributors (optional)

4. Budget
   a. KL2 Budget (.xls file)
   b. Upload to the application

5. Budget Justification
   a. KL2 Budget Justification (.pdf file)
   b. Upload to the application

6. Applicant Data Form (.pdf file) including:
   a. Completed KL2 Applicant Data Form

**SELECTION CRITERIA:**
The following criteria will be employed to evaluate the submitted proposals. Please take this into account in preparing the proposal.

NIH scoring criteria will be used to evaluate proposals. Each of the following areas 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

**PRESENTATIONS FOR KL2 FINALISTS:**
Finalists identified by the Review Panel will participate in a final presentation and interview with the KL2 selection committee. The mentors of the finalists will also be required to attend this meeting. Finalists selected will give a 15-minute presentation with questions and answers 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.

**Time Line of Events:**
- Call for Applications: October 1, 2015
- Letter of Intent Due from Potential Applicant: November 1, 2015
- Full Application Due: January 11, 2016
- Review Panel Convenes: Week of February 15, 2016 (tentative)
- Presentation/Interviews with Selected Finalists & Mentor: Week of February 29, 2016 (tentative)
Initial Notification of Decisions  March 11, 2016 (tentative)

Award Begins  April 1, 2016

*Dates subject to change based on the availability of all participants to attend on or around a particular date.

The evaluations of each proposal will be returned to the applicant with the intent that the feedback will be helpful to those who are funded and will assist those who are not funded to submit competitive independent K awards.

We look forward to your responsiveness to this solicitation.

Support for Candidates:
Technical questions about NITRO Competitions can be directed to: competitions@northwestern.edu.

Process related questions can be directed to Lauren Daniels at 312-503-3284 or nucats-ed@northwestern.edu.

Questions related to potential candidate eligibility or qualification can be directed to Richard Pope at 312-503-8003 or rmp158@northwestern.edu.