

What T32 Reviewers Do and
Don't Like:
A View into Subcommittee F

CABTRAC 2017

Overview

- Goal of T32 mechanism is to train the next generation of **cancer** researchers.
- Focus on postdocs (1:3 ratio) is because they are more likely to stay in cancer biology.
- Panel has a wide variety of expertise - clinical oncology, basic cancer research, nursing, public health

Training Program and Environment

- Program identity
 - Focus on “value added”. How will your T32 bring opportunities beyond what are already at your institution?
 - Is there a need – what is the gap you are filling?
 - Address institutional program overlap directly: How is your program unique?
 - Highlight how your T32 capitalizes on the strengths of your institution.

- Training program

- Strong pre-doc and post-doc training plans
- Details matter!
- T32 specific events
- Flexibility; opportunities to learn about a variety of different areas
- Clinical opportunities are a plus – can be through your CTSI, a clinical co-mentor, translational cancer research course, etc.
- Training in biostatistics/bioinformatics
- Opportunities for professional development (grant writing, oral communication skills, networking) are also positively viewed.
- IDPs
- Training opportunities for various career options (Business for Scientists, Teaching)
- Solid plan for trainee monitoring by program
- Have things in place to do what you say you are going to do
- Innovative approaches are valued

Training Program Director PD/PI

- Leader/role model committed to trainee success
- Applicant must have independent *cancer-focused* R01, or R01-like, peer-reviewed research funding at the time of application and award
- Salary support not allowed
- MPI: clear plan for what each will bring; spell out how PIs and steering committee will function/communicate
- Strong external advisory board that includes other T32 leaders; list names in application

Preceptors/Mentors

- With the exception of co-mentored faculty, all mentors should have *cancer related* R01 or R01-like funding.
- Mix of senior and junior mentors. Mentors without experience should have a co-mentoring plan
- Selection criteria
- Plan to review mentors periodically
- Evidence of collaboration

Trainees

- TGE pools should support slot requests
- Strong credentials
- URM recruitment is essential
- Short and long term evaluation plans

Training Record

- Slot utilization
- Publications: First author!
- Strong journals preferred
- Success in getting fellowships
- Career outcomes:
 - Good: trainees are in biomedical research
 - Better: trainees are in cancer research
 - Independent funding

Other considerations/non-scorable

- Diversity Plan (Recruitment and Retention)
- Institutional support
- Responsible Conduct of Research
- Budget
 - For new grants start small (1/3 or 2/6)
 - For renewals, if you have not filled all your slots you may be cut!
 - Applicant pool size matters as do other sources of funding available to trainees (are there other T32's?)

Renewals

- EAB report not required but a plus if strong
 - LOS from EAB members
- Trainee outcomes very important
 - First author pubs
 - Cancer related career outcomes
- Continue to innovate!