

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Science in Clinical Research Degree at UNC-Chapel Hill

UNC-Chapel Hill requests authorization to establish a Master of Science in Clinical Research (MSCR) degree (CIP 51.1401) effective August 2008.

Program Description

The MSCR program is an interdisciplinary research degree program designed to develop the skills necessary for a successful career as a principal investigator and collaborator in clinical and translational research. Clinical research is a unique discipline that requires formal training in diverse areas such as ethics, regulatory principles, and statistical and epidemiologic methodologies. The target student population includes potential investigators who are seeking additional training beyond their primary degree to facilitate clinical and translational research as a substantial component of their career. Recognizing the need to disseminate research findings into practice, the NIH Roadmap Initiative encourages the development of this type of program. UNC-Chapel Hill is considered a national leader in the training of junior investigators and has competed successfully for eight NIH Roadmap awards—more than any other institution.

UNC Tomorrow Relevance

The program primarily responds to UNC Tomorrow findings relating to the need to improve health and wellness in North Carolina, the need to educate more health professionals, and economic development. The NIH has challenged academic centers to re-engineer how clinical research is done in order to more effectively translate research findings into true advances in clinical practice, which are then implemented in communities. The close proximity of UNC-Chapel Hill to the Research Triangle Park highlights the numerous potential career paths for individuals trained in clinical and translational research. The program will contribute to the State's knowledge-based economy and the impact of research on economic growth across the State.

Resource Implications

The NIH has created Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) and a \$61 million grant announced May 29 will support the UNC Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute, which circulates medical knowledge among patients, doctors and researchers. Private support from a variety of biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and research organizations in the Research Triangle will continue as a source of funding. Teaching responsibilities will largely be absorbed by present faculty, and students will have mentorship in their home departments.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the UNC-Chapel Hill request to establish a Master of Science in Clinical Research (MSCR) degree (CIP 51.1401) effective August 2008.