

GERALD S. LEVEY SURGICAL RESEARCH AWARD

July 6, 2011

Application Deadline:	May 31, 2012
Award Activation:	July 1, 2012
Award Duration:	2 years

The Gerald S. Levey Surgical Award was established to honor Dr. Levey's years of service as Vice Chancellor, Medical Sciences and Dean, School of Medicine, University of California, Los Angeles. The Award will facilitate the career development of surgeon scientists by providing economic support for the laboratory experience during surgical residency at UCLA.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PEER REVIEW CRITERIA

Objective

To provide stipend support to help UCLA surgical residents to execute novel research projects, initiate careers in research, gain the necessary skills to begin an academic career based in research, and develop into surgeon-scientists.

Scientific Focus

Research based on human disease and focused in basic science, clinical, bioengineering or biotechnology, and public health problems.

Applicant

Applicants must be categorical general surgery residents at UCLA in the first year of training. The applicant should be in good standing with the residency program and plan to spend at least two years in the laboratory.

Sponsor

Applicants must be sponsored by a UCLA faculty member. The sponsor should have a focused research program that has received funding, and ideally a history of prior successful lab mentorship. Because the award recipient will receive only a stipend, additional research support for the proposed project must come from the sponsor's laboratory. Therefore, the proposed project will likely be related to the sponsor's funded research. The sponsor should clarify the role that the applicant played in the development of the proposal, the relationship of the proposed project to ongoing research in the sponsor's laboratory, and how the project will contribute toward the training and career development of the applicant.

Annual Award Amount

The stipend is targeted at \$50,000 per year. This target amount may vary depending on economic conditions.

Award Duration

Two years. Research recipients who wish to compete for a third year must submit a new

application outlining progress in the first two years of the award and defining the circumstances that require a third year of training . The sponsor must submit a letter indicating willingness to continue sponsorship and verifying the progress of the recipient.

Location of Work

On the UCLA campus or the grounds of West Los Angeles Veterans Administration Hospital.

Restrictions

- A sponsor may supervise a maximum of one Levey Award recipient in a given funding cycle. Any application for a new award that would exceed this limit will not be reviewed. If the award is in the final year, the faculty member may sponsor a new application.
- An applicant must have substantial involvement in preparing the application, understanding that the sponsor will provide significant guidance to the applicant.
- Co-sponsorship is allowed.
- Submission of applications with identical or significantly similar content in the same review cycle from a sponsor for project support is prohibited. If submitted, the peer review committee will recommend rejection of both applications.
- Award recipients are required to spend full-time effort in research and activities directly related to their development into independent researchers.
- An applicant may submit only one application per deadline.

Interim Reporting

Interim progress reports are required annually. Second-year funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress during the first year. Progress reports must include research training and accomplishments, abstracts and publications, and a brief plan for the second year.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The following must be submitted for the proposal to be reviewed.

Research Plan

The research plan should be constructed in the manner currently required by the NIH.

Specific Aims (one page). A strong grant application is driven by a strong, solid hypothesis with clear research objectives. The specific aims are a formal statement of the objectives and milestones of the research project towards testing the hypothesis. Consider whether the specific aims are logical and achievable. List then aims and then all the experiments that will be performed to support each aim. Keep in mind that your experiments must support your aims, and your aims are the test of your hypothesis. The Research Plan should:

- Include specific research objectives
- Be hypothesis-based
- Be obtainable within the proposed timeframe
- Be well-focused rather than broad and diffuse

Research Strategy (four pages).

a. Significance. Outline how the proposal addresses an important problem. If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced?

b. Innovation. Describe how the project is original and innovative. For example, does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice? Does it address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?

c. Approach. Use this section to describe how you plan to carry out the research. Your research methods should relate directly to the aims you have described. This section is critical for demonstrating that the applicant has developed a clear, organized and thoughtful study design that tests the central hypothesis. It is NOT a list of recipes for methods, experiments and data collection. Describe any novel concepts, approaches, tools, or technologies for the proposed studies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. As part of this section, provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the project. The Approach should include:

- An overview of the proposed design and conceptual framework.
- Study goals should relate to proposed study hypotheses.
- Details related to specific methodology; explain why the proposed methods are the best to accomplish study goals.
- Description of any novel concepts, approaches, tools or techniques.
- Details of how data will be collected and results analyzed.
- Consideration of required statistical techniques.
- Proposed work plan and timeline.
- Discussion of potential limitations and alternative approaches to achieve study aims.

d. References. Limited to 20.

Curricula Vitae

An updated CV of the applicant and the sponsor must be included.

Sponsor Letter

The Sponsor must submit a letter describing his or her commitment to applicant's career development and the plans for the two years. Co-sponsors may submit a single letter or individual letters. See "Sponsor" above.

Letters of Reference

The application must include three letters from faculty members familiar with the applicant's background and work. The letters should assess the applicant's qualifications, ability to carry out the proposed work, and prospects for a career as a surgeon-scientist. Letters from non-UCLA faculty members who served as the applicant's prior teachers and/or research mentors will be accepted.

Peer Review Criteria

Each criterion will account for one-third of the overall score.

Criterion 1 - Evaluation of the Applicant

1. Does the applicant have potential for a research career?
2. Are the applicant's career plans specified in the application?
3. Is the application supported by the trainee's academic record and the assessment provided by the three letters of reference?
4. Does the applicant have prior research experience and/or publications?
5. What is the sponsor's assessment of the applicant?

Criterion 2 - Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment

Sponsor/Training Plan

1. Is the sponsor an independent investigator?
2. Does the sponsor have the experience to direct the proposed research training, as evidenced by a track record of productivity, funding and prior trainees?
3. Does the mentor have adequate current funding to support the applicant's project?
4. Does the sponsor provide a comprehensive training plan that will facilitate the applicant's progress towards his/her research career goals?

Environment

1. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success for the training experience?
2. Is there evidence of department commitment to the sponsor's work?

Criterion 3 - Evaluation of the Proposal

1. Significance: Does this study address an important problem? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods and technologies that drive this field?
2. Approach: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned, feasible (as determined by

- preliminary data or the expertise available in the mentor's and/or collaborator's laboratories) and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative strategies?
3. Innovation: Is the project original?

Applicants should not contact reviewers regarding their applications. Discussing scientific content of an application or attempting to influence review outcome will constitute a conflict of interest in the review and will be cause for rejection of the application.

Revised July 6, 2011