April 24, 2017

Dear Deans, Department Chairs/Program Directors:

The National Institutes of Health has recently announced the NIH Director’s Early Independence Awards (DP5), a limited competition award (see the description at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-17-008.html) with a requested Letter of Intent deadline date of August 22, 2017 and an Application deadline date of September 22, 2017. The University may put forward two applications for this award.

You may wish to share this announcement with prospective PDs/PIs who are seeking an appointment in an independent research position. Alternatively, you may actively recruit eligible junior scientists to apply for support through this program. In either event, the Institution will be expected to provide substantial support for the junior scientist as detailed in the solicitation. To foster independence, it may behoove PDs/PIs to be hosted by institutions other than the ones at which they trained. It is permitted for the appointment of a candidate at a host institution to be contingent upon receipt of the award.

The NIH Director’s Early Independence Awards supports exceptional investigators who wish to pursue independent research directly after completion of their terminal doctoral/research degree or clinical residency, thereby forgoing the traditional post-doctoral training period. Though most newly graduated doctoral-level researchers would benefit by post-doctoral training, a small pool of outstanding junior investigators would benefit instead by launching directly into an independent research career. For these select investigators, who have established a record of scientific innovation and research productivity and who have demonstrated unusual leadership, drive, and maturity, post-doctoral training would unnecessarily delay their entry into performing independent research. The awards will be for up to $250,000 in direct costs per year, plus applicable Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs. Approximately 10 awards are anticipated.

The NIH encourages applications from scientists from all disciplines, including the biological, behavioral, clinical, social, physical, chemical, computational, engineering, and mathematical sciences, who provide evidence of interest in exploring topics of relevance to the NIH mission.

If you would like to nominate someone for this award, please upload your Letter of Interest (LOI) as a single document file into UVM’s InfoReady Portal for Institutional Competitions (https://uvm.infoready4.com/). The LOI should be a single document to include the nominee’s CV and also an additional brief statement of no more than 2 pages with the following information: 1) how the nominee meets the eligibility requirements; 2) how the nominee has demonstrated appropriate experience, training and skills to conduct highly innovative research; 3) how the nominee has demonstrated leadership and management abilities to conduct
independent research; 4) the significance of the nominee’s research project and; 5) a description of the institutional commitment necessary for the nominee to conduct full-time, independent research for the duration of the award (integration of research into the dept., available space and equipment and any other beneficial resources/opportunities.) The deadline for submitting LOIs through the InfoReady Portal is May 22, 2017 before 4:30 pm after which the Portal will automatically close.

Please direct questions concerning this announcement to Hilda Alajajian.

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