MSU Receives Five Year NIH/NIDA R25 Grant Award For National Hispanic Science Network Early Stage Career Mentoring Program

It took almost two years to prepare and build an MSU-based NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) research mentoring initiative and consortium that includes collaborators in the National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN), Arizona State University, the University of Miami, and more than 30 NIH/NIDA-funded Principal Investigators distributed in all regions of the country. In March 2011, after competitive peer review of an MSU-initiated R25 science education grant proposal, NIDA recognized the initiative’s strength and promise, and awarded a five year grant of $1.1 million to sustain its development. MSU College of Human Medicine Founding Director of this initiative is James C. Anthony, PhD, professor of Epidemiology, whose work also is supported by a just-renewed five year NIDA K05 Senior Scientist Research and Mentorship Award of $640,000. Co-Directors are Arizona State University Professor Felipe Castro, PhD, and University of Miami Associate Professor Hilda Pantín, PhD, who also is executive director of the NHSN.

Each year, this mentoring initiative recruits five scientist-fellows still at an early stage of the research career, who have made a career commitment to seek and secure NIDA funding for basic or clinical translational research of importance to the growing Hispanic population of the United States, and whose sponsoring institution shows support via release time required to achieve these career goals (at least two days per week on average). Recruitment for that research training program is open to all fellows who are US citizens or permanent residents, irrespective of family heritage or specific US population focus.
Each fellow's success in goal achievement is enhanced via weekly group and monthly individualized program sessions and instruction from the program directors and faculty, as well as regular individualized research consultation and technical assistance provided by a team of primary and secondary mentors who already have secured NIDA research project grant awards in the fellow's chosen area of research.

The program provides stipends and travel support for study visits required to prepare NIDA grant applications, attendance at the annual scientific meetings of the NHSN and the College on Problems of Drug Dependence, as well as a research support award for preliminary studies designed with the aid of the mentoring team and completed by the fellow.

At MSU, the program will be based on the East Lansing campus in the College of Human Medicine’s Department of Epidemiology, with local collaboration with MSU College of Social Science Professor Ruben Martinez and the Julian Samora Research Institute.

Professor Anthony's commitment to research training and mentoring of new and early stage investigators is not new. He successfully proposed and established his first NIDA drug dependence epidemiology and prevention research training program for predoctoral and postdoctoral research fellows from the United States in the early 1990s. Since then, there have been NIDA awards to sustain this program at MSU as well as on the Baltimore campus of Johns Hopkins University at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he is adjunct professor. He also is founding director for an ongoing NIH Fogarty International Center and NIDA-funded epidemiology research training program for fellows from Peru and other Andean countries of South America. That program has brought to the MSU campus a total of 12 MD postgraduate research fellows for long-term study visits, fellowships, and Epidemiology degree programs here in Michigan.
For more information on the Program, email: r25@epi.msu.edu.