October 23, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

Upon becoming NCATS Director on September 23, one of my first actions was to re-activate the search for the director of the NCATS Division of Clinical Innovation. Following is the advertisement that is appearing now in *The New England Journal of Medicine* and in other communications. Since this position is so important to me and to NCATS, I want to share my views of the DCI Director position, and what I am looking for in the person who fills it.

The DCI Director position is quite simply the best job in the world for the right person. It offers the opportunity — in fact, the obligation — to drive fundamental systemwide change to create a national network for translational medicine. Some of the largest and most complex problems in translational science are in the clinical realm, and the majority of NCATS’ budget is focused there; thus it stands to reason that the DCI Director search is my highest priority recruitment.

I am looking for a visionary person for this position, someone who knows and is accomplished in the state of the art in CT/human subjects research, but who draws from that experience not satisfaction with the status quo, but rather concrete and actionable ideas on how to improve it. The scale, seriousness and urgency of the problems that confront us demand that the CTSA program, like the rest of NCATS, must drive changes that result not in arithmetic, but logarithmic, improvements in human subjects research efficiency and effectiveness. I am looking for a DCI Director with vision and effectiveness to reach that goal.

The DCI Director must be a leader in CT research, respected by colleagues as having successfully accomplished scientific and systems change. In addition, however, the DCI Director must be a team player, committed not only to integrating the CTSA centers into a more effective whole, but also integrating DCI with the other parts of NCATS – the Division of Preclinical Innovation, the Office of Rare Diseases Research, and the programs supported by the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN) and the NIH Common Fund – and integrating NCATS activities with the other NIH Institutes and Centers, FDA, biopharma, and patient and nonprofit organizations. Lastly, the DPI Director must have excellent political skills, given the collaborative imperative of NCATS and the high profile of the program, NCATS, and translational science as a discipline. Ideally, the DCI Director would have been a CTSA PI, or served in a high-level capacity at a CTSA. Of course, if a spectacular candidate without CTSA experience is interested, I would welcome that. But the organization and history of the CTSA program are so unique and idiosyncratic that it would be difficult for someone completely new to the program to make a difference quickly, and many of the priorities of DCI require seizing the moment to drive change.

Concerning my management style, I am looking for a colleague who shares my vision and to whom I can trust delegating day-to-day issues of DCI, while retaining final funding decisions. I empower those who work with me to drive their programs to meet their own and their programs’ potential.

If you have potential interest in the DCI Director position and want to learn more, I urge you to speak to any member of the search committee, who are:
Dr. Steve Katz, Director, NIAMS (Co-chair)
Dr. Josephine Briggs, Director, NCCAM and Acting Director, DCI/NCATS (Co-chair)
Dr. Walter Koroshetz, Deputy Director, NINDS
Dr. Pamela Collins, Director, ORDGMH/OD/NIMH
Dr. James Doroshow, Director, DCTD/NCI
Dr. John McKew, Director, Therapeutics Research Branch, DPI/NCATS
Dr. Clay Johnston, University of California, UCSF, School of Medicine
Dr. Barry Coller, The Rockefeller Institute
Mr. Ron Canada, HR Specialist, NIH/OD
Ms. Renee King, Deputy Director, IC Services, OEO/DM

More information can be found at: http://www.ncats.nih.gov, or you may also contact the NCATS staff contact for the recruitment, Terrie Squadere, at 301-451-1276.

This is a critical time for clinical and translational research, full of unprecedented need and opportunity. Thank you for your help in recruiting a DCI Director who will work with all of us to realize the enormous potential of NCATS to transform CT research to the benefit of patients, science and the nation.

Sincerely,

Christopher P. Austin, M.D.
Director
National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences
National Institutes of Health

THE POSITION: The newly established National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) will catalyze the generation of innovative methods and technologies that will enhance the development, testing, and implementation of diagnostics and therapeutics across a wide range of human diseases and conditions. As one of the National Institutes of Health Institutes/Centers, NCATS is not charged to focus on any one specific disease or human condition, but instead emphasizes the development of the tools and technologies to speed the process from basic discovery to better diagnostics and new treatments.

The Director, Division of Clinical Innovation (DCI), provides overall leadership and stewardship of NIH investments to bring innovation to the implementation of clinical research. A major component of the responsibilities of the DCI Division is oversight of the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) program. The NCATS CTSA program is a major national investment in the translational sciences, providing
academic homes at leading institutions across the country for the advancement and career development of investigators and supporting research resources needed by both local and national research communities to improve the quality and efficiency of all phases of translational research. This is a highly visible program and is expected to provide infrastructure for the full spectrum of translational research, leveraging both NCATS investments and investments from other NIH Institutes and Centers.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED: Applicants must possess an M.D., or equivalent degree, as well as senior-level experience and leadership in the translation of basic science into clinical research. Candidates should be outstanding communicators with a scientific vision for the future needs of clinical research and demonstrated experience in running large, complex clinical research programs. Applicants should also demonstrate the ability to think strategically, work collaboratively and use a consultative approach to problem solving and decision making.

SALARY/BENEFITS/OTHER INFORMATION: Salary is commensurate with experience and a full package of Civil Service benefits is available, including: retirement, health and life insurance, long term care insurance, leave and savings plan (401K equivalent). The National Institutes of Health inspires public confidence in science by maintaining high ethical principles. In addition to the Federal government’s code of ethics, we have our own agency specific standards - check them out at the NIH Ethics web site: http://ethics.od.nih.gov/default.htm. This position is subject to a background investigation.

HOW TO APPLY: Applications must include Curriculum Vitae, Bibliography, and a cover letter describing your vision for the future of translational and clinical research as well as how your qualifications match the needs of the position. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications starting November 9, 2012 and will continue until a selection is made. Application packages should be sent to the National Institutes of Health, National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, ATTN: Terrie Squadere, 6701 Democracy Boulevard, Suite 1075, Bethesda, Maryland 20892.

For further information, please call (301) 451-1276. All information provided by candidates will remain confidential and will not be released outside the NCATS search process without a signed release from candidates.

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