It is the holiday season, and you can give the gift of ideas! And perhaps the CTSC can reciprocate with pilot funding. Our peer-reviewed pilot funding program has invested more than $3.5 million in new ideas since its inception in 2008, and investigators have reaped more than $31 million in follow up awards! The program focuses on multi-disciplinary and collaborative projects that will advance translational research. One of our more popular opportunities is the CTSC Annual Pilot.

Our CTSC Annual Pilot Program is a very attractive option for researchers who wish to conduct innovative translational research projects focused on the invention, preclinical development and/or first in man studies of novel therapeutic agents, biomedical devices, and diagnostics designed to address unmet clinical needs. Funding is intended to facilitate development of enabling technologies; new therapeutic, diagnostic or outcomes assessment approaches and/or device; novel cross-disciplinary collaborative programs; and promote research in the community. Research which may create intellectual property is encouraged. Applications to enhance an existing non-federally funded project or enable a proposal to a federal agency are considered for use of CTSC and Case Coulter Translational Research Partnership (CCTRP) resources. This pilot has few restrictions and allows for the hiring of personnel.

"So You Want To Do Comparative Effectiveness Research?"

Overview: This half-day symposium will help heighten the understanding of comparative effectiveness research (CER), identify strategies to evaluate competing treatments and highlight the various research design methods available to perform CER. The course will be taught at an
The CTSC Annual Pilot program is currently accepting letters of intent and you can read more details in the RFA here. Letters of intent are due on January 15, 2013.

The CTSC’s Annual Pilot Award can catalyze collaborative inter-institutional research, community based research and/or multi-disciplinary research. For example, Dr. John Kirwan is leading a translational team at Cleveland Clinic engaged in aging, obesity and diabetes among other research areas. A leading authority on these topics, Kirwan has led or collaborated on over 100 publications. In 2009, Dr. Kirwan collaborated with imaging expert Chris Flask, PhD, at CWRU/UH in a pilot award entitled: "Insulin Resistance: Detection of Hepatocellular Lipid Sub-Species by Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy". This research led to 3 publications and 4 presentations at National meetings. The most recently published paper: (Fealy CE, Haus JM, Solomon TP, Pagadala M, Flask CA, McCullough AJ, Kirwan JP. "Short-term exercise reduces markers of hepatocyte apoptosis in nonalcoholic fatty liver disease," J Appl Physiol. 2012 Jul; 113(1):1-6.), concluded that short-term exercise reduces a circulatory marker of hepatocyte apoptosis in obese individuals and they proposed that "changes in the proapoptotic environment may be mediated through improved insulin sensitivity and increased oxidative capacity." Importantly, the preliminary data generated from this pilot study was used to leverage an NIH R01 funded grant worth $1.7 Million that is using the MRS procedures developed in the Pilot Award to examine the effect of bariatric surgery on liver fat. While just one study on Dr. Kirwan’s long research resume, it led to further research in the same area and helped crystallize and spur his and his team's subsequent research.

"The CTSC Annual Pilot program provides critical seed money to investigators who are conducting translational research and need to collect pilot data to leverage larger federally funded research support," said Kirwan.

David Wilson, PhD, Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Radiology at Case Western Reserve’s School Engineering and School of Medicine, received an Annual Pilot in 2009 centered on his work with coronary plaque characterization with vascular OCT imaging. This study used an interdisciplinary team to develop methods for improved detection and staging of blood vessel disease. Optical coherence tomography (OCT) was used to obtain very high resolution, microscopic images of the vessel wall. Also supported by a Case Coulter Translational Research Partnership award, the T2 study resulted in several publications including: (Wang Z, Kyono H, Bezerra HG, Wang H, Gargesha M, Alraies C, Xu C, Schmitt JM, Wilson DL, Costa MA, Rollins AM, J, Wilson.

Explorys Collaborative Pilot

Available Funds
Explorys Collaborative Pilot: Three (3) pilots will be awarded at $30,000 ($20,000 from the CTSC and $10,000 in-kind technical support from Explorys). The purpose of this pilot funding opportunity (maximum of $30,000 over 6 months) is to innovate and collaborate with Explorys informatics personnel to develop novel or enhance existing approaches for expanding the use of BIG DATA in organizing, integrating, searching, analyzing, or visualizing health care data.

Eligibility
Successful applications will involve two or more disciplines, with a focus on building innovative clinical research informatics, aligned with a key Explorys focus area as listed above and allocate no more than a third of the budget on supporting development efforts or analysis by Explorys. Outcomes of funded projects are expected to result in novel approaches that leverage
"Semiautomatic segmentation and quantification of calcified plaques in intracoronary optical coherence tomography images." Biomed Opt. 2010 Nov-Dec;15(6):061711. Wilson has several larger projects in process as a result of his studies from this annual pilot, including an R01 study on "In vivo Characterization of Stents Using Intravascular OCT Imaging" that received a fundable score.

"The Annual Pilot was the carrot that catalyzed discussions into actions. Our cardiovascular imaging research group consisting of Drs. Costa and Bezerra of Cardiology, Drs. Rollins and Jenkins of Biomedical Engineering, students, and fellows, has been very productive following the pilot with numerous publications, two major grants funded, and a third proposal likely to be funded," Wilson said.

W. H. Wilson Tang, MD, is another fine example of the utility of our Annual Pilot program. In 2008 he received an annual pilot for his study entitled: "Understanding Disease Progression in Inherited Cardiomyopathies: Detection and Longitudinal Monitoring of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy in Heterozygous MYBPC3 Mutation Carriers in the Geauga County Amish Community." This area of population based research led to the publication: [Sabe De, MD, Allen G. Borowski, RDCS, Heng Wang, MD PhD, Leah Nye, NP, Baozhong Xin, PhD, James D. Thomas, MD, and W.H. Wilson Tang, MD. "Subclinical Echocardiographic Abnormalities in Phenotype-Negative Carriers of MYBPC3 Gene Mutation for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy." Am Heart J. 2011 Aug;162(2):262-267.e3]. This research topic is unique in that it allowed for the collaboration with Dr. Heng Wang's clinic located within the Amish community. This research led to the NIH funded study: Integrative Genomics of Human Heart Failure, which is a large, $9.1 million, collaborative study between the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University of which Dr. Tang is the Principal Investigator.

"This is a unique funding opportunity that allows collaboration between our group and the DDC Clinic for Special Needs Children led by Dr. Wang to better understand the phenotypic manifestations of asymptomatic mutation carriers of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy in the Amish community," Tang said. "As a result of this pilot grant initiative, we continue to work in the research area of integrative genomics in cardiomyopathies as well as to care for patients with specific cardiomyopathies and their families in our Cardiomyopathy Program, with the hope to understand how to better diagnose and treat these conditions."

CTSC Annual Pilot Accepting Letters of Intent

Available Funds
The CTSC and the Case Coulter Translational Research Partnership is accepting letters of intent for the 2013 CTSC Annual Pilot Grant Funding. The grant will fund up to $50,000 to support innovative translational research projects focused upon the invention, preclinical development and/or first in man studies of novel therapeutic agents, biomedical devices and diagnostics designed to address unmet clinical needs.

Eligibility
The CTSC and CCTRP will provide seed money to faculty in multidisciplinary programs for Pilot Projects that will lead to efficient use of resources and support of inter-institutional, clinical and translational research in the City of Cleveland. Investigators in the basic science and clinical departments at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic, MetroHealth Medical Center, University Hospitals Case Medical Center and The Louis
The collaboration and the long term outcomes of these Annual Pilot Awardees projects exemplify the success of our pilot program. Projects range throughout the translational spectrum. Funding is competitive, but can really help develop a project for larger grant funding. We urge you to explore the many opportunities this can provide for you and your research.

Pamela B. Davis, M.D., PhD        Richard Rudick, M.D.

Staff Spotlight: Clara Pelfrey, PhD. CTSC Evaluator

The CTSC is pleased to welcome Clara Pelfrey, PhD, as the new program evaluator. Pelfrey has a BS in Zoology from Miami University in Ohio, and a PhD in Medical Microbiology and Immunology from the Ohio State University. She did her post-doctoral training at the NIH in Bethesda, MD, mostly in the Neuroimmunology Branch, studying the immunology of Multiple Sclerosis. She also has a Biology Teaching Certification for grades 7‐12 from Cleveland State University.

Upon completion of her education, Pelfrey returned to Cleveland and was on the faculty at both Case and the Cleveland Clinic working on the immunology of MS and why the disease disproportionately affects women compared to men. She went on to become a Scientific Review Officer (SRO) for 2 different companies, and most recently was teaching science in the Shaker City Schools.

As Program Evaluator, Pelfrey's focus will be to examine what the CTSC has accomplished and what impact it is having on clinical and translational research in Greater Cleveland. Likewise, what we learn will help inform the CTSC leadership as they improve, modify, and make plans for the future.

Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center are eligible. The PI is required to be a faculty member from one of the 5 CTSC partner institutions and eligible to be a PI for an NIH grant.

Deadline
Letters of intent are due by January 15th, 2013, 11:59pm. Investigators will be invited to apply for the funding based on the letters of intent and will need to submit full applications by March 15th, 2013.

For questions regarding this RFA or your application, please contact:

CTSC Pilot Program Office
CTSC‐Pilot‐Coordinator@case.edu
216‐368‐2391

CTSC Tool Shop Webinar

When: Friday, December 14th starting at 12 pm ET

Featuring:
Science Exchange - presented by: Elizabeth Lorns

Science Exchange is a web-based platform to help researchers efficiently find and access research core facilities.

Since launching in August 2011, Science Exchange has gained significant traction in the US with core facilities from over 200 research institutes using the free platform to help get additional work and track usage of their facilities. The free software significantly reduces the administrative burden of managing core facilities and ensures payment from core facility users, reducing the amount of accounts receivable owed to facilities. Science Exchange software is free for facilities and researchers, the business model is
She is most looking forward to working with researchers again. "I love problem-solving as well as looking at ways to facilitate clinical and translational research in the Cleveland area", said Pelfrey.

Clara began in October. When you see her, be sure to welcome her to the CTSC.

Contact info:
clara.pelfrey@case.edu
(216) 368-6478

based on a 5% transaction fee for facilitating payment across institutions.

Please join the webinar to learn more about Science Exchange and help create a centralized portal for efficient access to research and core facilities.

Click Here to register

CTSA Tool Shop information is available on CTSACentral.org under Events and on the CTSA Tool Shop home page.

Contact the CTSA Tool Shop Coordinator with any questions.

Justin White
Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative

If you have a suggestion for a story in the CTSC Newsletter email justin.white@case.edu