

**Year 3 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

**Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai**

**Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's COVID-19 Fund to Retain Clinical  
Scientists: Expansion of the Distinguished Scholar Award**

**Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

- *DEI In Hiring, Promotion, Advancement, and Admissions*

**Description of Work:**

In 2022, the Office of Gender Equity in Science and Medicine (OGESM) at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS) received support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's COVID-19 Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists to expand the Distinguished Scholars Award (DSA) Program. OGESM initially launched the DSA program in January of 2020 to support junior faculty with independent research programs who were integrating family caregiving responsibilities into their careers.

When OGESM developed and launched the DSA program in 2020, the program was based on similar initiatives at other academic medical centers with successful returns of investment (20-25:1) in terms of grant funding success, and proven improvements in retention and advancement of gender diverse faculty. Since then, with lessons learned and now expanded funding, we have evolved and expanded the program with the goals of continuing to improve retention of diverse faculty.

Evaluation of and feedback from the 2020 and 2021 cohorts of DSA scholars encouraged us to explore opportunities to build on the previous successes of the DSA program, and offer more robust programming for awardees. In 2021, OGESM revised the application process based on applicant and scholar feedback, grew the program to include three runners-up who would receive grant-writing support, and began to expand the program to better meet the needs of four 2021 awardees based upon input from the 2020 cohort. This input led us to connect 2021 awardees to key institutional career development resources, including the Mount Sinai LEAD program, and programs through the Office for Women's Careers, and bring scholars together for peer- support opportunities. Another benefit of the program was professionally produced short videos of each scholar for their websites to effectively share their research and attract trainees to their labs.

In 2022, OGESM at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai was selected as an award recipient from the COVID-19 Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists, the largest U.S. collaborative funding effort for equity in biomedicine. This funding was part of a \$12.1 million effort made possible by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation in concert with the American Heart Association, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, the John Templeton Foundation, the Rita Allen Foundation, and the Walder Foundation. With this award, OGESM

## **Year 3 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

was granted the opportunity to build out an interdisciplinary, robust support network for a new cohort of scholars navigating their successful careers and caregiving. The COVID-19 Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists Award funding was designed to support the strengthening of policies, practices, and processes to advance the research productivity and retention of early-career faculty members whose family caregiving responsibilities have intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pre-award period, OGESM prioritized planning to ensure the pool of 2022 DSA applicants was reflective of the racial, ethnic, and gender diverse talent at Mount Sinai. We worked together with stakeholders from the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, the Center for Scientific Diversity, the Office of Faculty Development, and the Mount Sinai LEAD program to build out an application timeline and process that would encourage and support applicants who are balancing multiple priorities. This interdisciplinary team also collaborated on the development and execution of a dissemination plan to ensure the request for applications would reach a diverse audience, across different racial identities, gender identities, and care taker identities.

The call for proposals in 2022, just as in 2020 and 2021, invited all Mount Sinai clinical/translational or basic scientists at the assistant professor level balancing caregiving responsibility with their independent research careers to apply, but placed a special emphasis on those whose hardships were exacerbated due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The application included: short and long-term career goals; evidence of independence; research plans; an NIH biosketch including other support; budget and budget justification; letters of support; and a description of caregiving responsibilities. Well before the application deadline, OGESM offered a virtual FAQ session for interested applicants to learn more about the opportunity, and connect with our team for technical support along the way.

We received applications from junior faculty from diverse genders, and with a range of caregiving demands from childcare to eldercare. With this expanded support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's COVID-19 Fund to Retain Clinician Scientists, the OGESM awarded seven junior scholars with the Distinguished Scholar Award. Each of the seven awardees received \$50,000 in funding to support their research, with the opportunity to use funds to hire a technician, study coordinator, data analyst, fellow, student, or grant writer. Through this funding, we also awarded three runners up with \$2,500 to be used toward paying a grant-writer.

Through a needs assessment at the start of the award cycle, the 2022 cohort identified grant writing, leadership development, and time/opportunity management as priority areas for support and resources. This assessment will now inform the interdisciplinary team that came together to build the application process to regroup and build out programming and opportunities that will be responsive to the 2022 cohort's needs. OGESM will also continue to connect 2022 awardees to key institutional career development resources, including Mount Sinai LEAD and programs through the Offices for Women's Careers (OWC), Faculty Development (OFD), and Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). The scholars will also have the opportunity to meet one on one with the Dean of the medical school, and are offered a rehearsal session with OGESM's Dean prior to their meetings.

We continue to meet with the 2020 and 2021 cohorts, to support their careers. This often includes identifying resources and senior faculty with relevant expertise. We also will support the development of a Distinguished Scholars Network for peer mentorship and professional development across past

## **Year 3 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

cohorts. We believe that with through the continuous evolution of the Distinguished Scholar award, Mount Sinai's emerging contributors to scientific discovery can keep their important work on track while directly tending to the needs of their families, and Mount Sinai can promote retention of a diverse and thriving workforce.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://icahn.mssm.edu/about/gender-equity>

**Point of Contact Name:** Sandra Masur, PhD; Toni Stern, MD, MS, MBA; Amy Kelley, MD, MSHS

**Email Address for Point of Contact:** [sandra.masur@mssm.edu](mailto:sandra.masur@mssm.edu); [toni.stern@mssm.edu](mailto:toni.stern@mssm.edu);  
[amy.kelley@mssm.edu](mailto:amy.kelley@mssm.edu)