

**LLOYD B. MINOR, MD**

CARL AND ELIZABETH NAUMANN DEAN OF THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Professor of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery

Professor of Neurobiology and of Bioengineering, by courtesy



May 5, 2021

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GI T32 Program Director  
Stanford Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology  
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Subject: T32 Training Grant in Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Dear Natalie:

I am pleased to offer the enthusiastic support of the School of Medicine (SoM) for the renewal of the long standing T32 Training Grant in Gastroenterology and Hepatology, DK007056, PI Natalie Torok, MD. This training grant has provided key support for the development and growth of entire GI/Hepatology program at Stanford, and many of our current faculty are graduates of the T32. With the overall excellence of the biomedical sciences at Stanford, the outstanding program faculty, the tradition of interaction and collaboration among the faculty and their lab groups, and the innovative research being carried out, there is a strong prospect for the continued success of this training program.

As the progress report indicates, the trainees in this program have been very productive, contributing to pioneering research across basic, translational, and population health research. During the last cycle, 85% of the graduating fellows obtained faculty/instructor positions at Stanford or other major academic institutions. With continued and enhanced commitment to support and mentor trainees, and providing support for their mentors, we are confident that our program will continue to excel, and generate a pipeline of future leaders in GI and Hepatology.

A unique feature of the T32 Program is the exceptional training environment that is enhanced by the tradition of collaboration across the Stanford community and the development of innovative new technologies. As highlighted in the proposal, our program became well-integrated with key university programs, such as the Translational Research and Applied Medicine Program, that supports translational projects and provides pilot funding for innovative projects, the Stanford Diabetes Research Center, and the Stanford Spectrum Programs, to list a few. This synergy created increasing opportunities for translation, and an unprecedented growth in productivity for our program.

This program has also strengthened by the new vision on science/translation in Pediatric Gastroenterology, and the combined program features accomplished, internationally known experts.

Below I would like to highlight the extensive institutional support offered for training grants and their trainees in the School of Medicine:

**1. Developing and promoting a culture that advances the highest standards of scientific rigor, reproducibility and responsible conduct of research.**

- Rigor and Reproducibility (R&R). Our goals are to enhance training in experimental design and data collection, organization, and analysis. Stanford Libraries offer six to eight Software Carpentry workshops per year, training up to 40 trainees at a time to learn foundational coding and data science skills to solve their computational challenges. With this support, the university now has 62 internally trained instructors to deliver such workshops to trainees on an ongoing basis. The Data Studio through our Department of Biomedical Data Science (formed in 2015) also provides specialized focus in rigor and reproducibility for our fellows. Most sessions are an extensive and in-depth consultation for a researcher based on research questions, data, statistical models, and other material prepared by the researcher with the aid of a facilitator. During the Data Studio, the researcher explains the project, goals, and needs. Experts in the area across campus are invited to contribute to the brainstorming. Drop-in consulting is also available pairing postdocs with faculty experts in data science to provide assistance with research questions and data analysis.
- Responsible Conduct of Research All of the trainees in the gastroenterology programs are required to participate in a course titled "The Responsible Conduct of Research" (MED255), which is offered several times a year. Attendance at this course is mandatory for all trainees associated with the GI division irrespective of whether or not they receive training grant funds. An alternative course (MED255C) also can be taken by individuals involved in clinical research. The course is designed specifically to engage clinical researchers in productive discussions about ethical issues commonly encountered during their clinical research careers, and addresses contemporary debates at the interface of biomedical science and society.

Virtually every interaction between the mentor and the mentee is a potential source for instruction in responsible conduct of research. In addition, regular lab meetings, which provide consistent forums to evaluate and critique experimental data, provide a venue for further consideration of the responsible conduct of research. Specifically, these discussions offer the opportunity to address ethical issues such as responsible authorship, sharing of data and reagents, and data management.

## **2. Ensuring sufficient start-up funding to permit early-stage faculty to participate in training, and bridge funding to ensure that training may continue if a mentor experiences a hiatus in funds.**

Ensuring sufficient start-up funding to permit early-stage faculty to participate in training, and bridge funding to ensure that training may continue if a mentor experiences a hiatus in funds. Per SoM policy, start-up funds are provided and documented in offer letters. The Office of Academic Affairs and Faculty Compensation reviews offer letters to ensure start-up funds are adequate. Bridge funding is provided in the case of a hiatus in funding and is decided at the department level.

## **3. Ensuring faculty have protected time devoted to mentoring, training, and research.**

Each faculty member's percent effort with respect to teaching (mentoring, training), research, clinical care, and administration is articulated and reviewed regularly (usually annually) by the department. The SoM recognizes the critical importance of mentoring trainees and faculty and will ensure that you will have adequate time as part of your University and department roles to direct this outstanding training program. Training grant faculty are also given the necessary time to excel as faculty mentors and are encouraged to participate in various programs to enhance their skills in leadership, teaching, and mentoring. The SoM offers Mentor Training courses for faculty who would like to assess their readiness and skills to be strong peer mentors, and who aspire to refine their repertoires in order to have a positive impact in mentoring a new generation of Stanford faculty. The course highlights themes such as good and bad starts, stress, mood, gender and inter-generational dynamics, and giving and receiving feedback.

**4. Providing adequate staff, facilities, and educational resources.** The Dean's office supports the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), with eight staff members. OPA sponsors multiple programs addressing career skills for academic research, entrepreneurial endeavors, mentoring, and communication. Programs include talks and workshops on setting up a lab, negotiating job offers, teaching, writing grants and fellowships, and conflict resolution. Quarterly orientations, held in conjunction with the Stanford and School of Medicine career centers, provide a wide range of information on Stanford, resources available to postdocs, and career planning. The Assistant Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs meets regularly with postdocs and faculty to resolve conflicts, plan careers, and provide general guidance. Postdocs can and do audit graduate courses, including our newly minted Mini-courses, which allow a deep dive into or exploration of a new area with a limited time commitment. The SoM has a variety of programs to help fund trainees, including the Dean's fellowship program. This funding helps to provide the financial support necessary to allow trainees to extend their training and complete their research projects. The SoM Dean's office supports all T32 training grant directors by hosting a quarterly meeting to share best practices and discuss topics of interest, and both the SoM and H&S Dean's offices carry out official program reviews, including interdepartmental, departmental, and T32 program reviews.

**5. Stanford is committed to promoting the diversity of its trainees.** Stanford has excellent centers committed to coordinating trainee extracurricular, professional development, and cultural activities including the Graduate Student Center and Cultural Community Centers for students/trainees from (or with interest in) the Latino, Black/African American, Native American, Asian American, International, Women's, Islamic and LGBTQ communities on campus. All trainees in the School of Medicine have access to health insurance and counseling and psychological services.

In 2015, Dr. Lloyd Minor formed the Dean's Task Force on Diversity and Societal Citizenship. With a focus on enhancing the student and trainee experience and empowering them to become societal leaders, the Task Force explored challenges and outlined a five-year strategy focused on (1) increasing diversity and promoting inclusion; (2) enhancement of the educational curriculum to promote societal citizenship and increase awareness of societal issues and ways for advocacy; and (3) ensuring accountability for diversity across all levels of leadership.

In 2017, Dean Minor formally charged the Stanford Medicine Diversity Cabinet to advise the Dean and SoM leadership, disseminate communication, and provide coordination across the myriad of diversity- and inclusion-related initiatives with Stanford Medicine. The Cabinet reports directly to the Dean and includes faculty, staff and trainee representatives from the Stanford SoM, Stanford Hospital, and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Further, the Diversity Center of Representation and Empowerment, or D-CORE, was established in October 2017 to provide a physical location where any member of the Stanford Medicine community interested in issues of inclusion and diversity can hold meetings or support groups, or just hang out and study. It includes a space for prayer and meditation, and diversity focused staff hold regular office hours to increase engagement with and support for trainees of all backgrounds.

**6. Ensuring the research facilities and laboratory practices promote the safety of trainees.** Safety is a core value at Stanford, and the University is committed to continued advancement of an institutional safety culture with strong programs of personal safety, accident and injury prevention, wellness promotion, and compliance with applicable environmental and health and safety laws and regulations. Stanford University makes all reasonable efforts to: (1) promote occupational and personal safety, health and wellness; (2) protect the health and safety of Stanford University faculty, staff, and trainees; (3) provide information to faculty, staff, and trainees about health and safety hazards; (4) identify and correct health hazards and encourage faculty, staff, and trainees to

report potential hazards; (5) conduct activities in a manner protective of the environment, and inform the Stanford community regarding environmental impacts associated with institutional operations; and (6) maintain a risk-based emergency management program to reduce the impact of emergency events to the Stanford community. Faculty, staff, and trainees are responsible for: (1) keeping themselves informed of conditions affecting their health and safety; (2) participating in safety training programs as required by Stanford policy and their supervisors and instructors; (3) adhering to health and safety practices in their workplace, classroom, laboratory, and student campus residences; and (4) advising of or reporting to supervisors, instructors or Environmental Health and Safety potentially unsafe practices or serious hazards in the workplace, classroom or laboratory. Stanford's program for providing a safe workplace for faculty, staff, and trainees includes: facility design; hazard identification, workplace inspection, and corrective action; shutdown of dangerous activities; medical surveillance; and emergency preparedness.

**7. Ensuring the research facilities are accessible to trainees with disabilities.** The School of Medicine supports the recruitment, enrollment and graduation of students with disabilities. The Vice Provost for Graduate Education's diversity statement includes disabled students, and the Stanford Office of Graduate Admissions clearly states our policy of non-discrimination, including prohibiting discrimination based on disability). Furthermore, the application and recruiting materials for Stanford Biosciences programs all indicate Stanford's full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Stanford Biosciences webpage includes a link to the Office of Accessible Education, which provides resources to all students on campus with disabilities. All of Stanford's research facilities are fully accessible to researchers with disabilities, and we are fully committed to providing any necessary accommodations for disabled students. While it is not required for applicants to declare any physical or mental disabilities they may have during the admissions process, those who self-identify as having a disability are invited to attend our Annual Diversity Luncheon. Representatives from the Office of Accessible Education attend orientation events and distribute materials on disability accommodations.

**8. Ensuring a positive, supportive and inclusive research and training environment for individuals from all backgrounds.** The SoM provides an environment of personal and professional exploration, allowing fellows to define and follow their own path to success. Our unique location in the middle of Silicon Valley – as well as the co-location of SoM and H&S with the rest of Stanford's campus – allows for diverse connections to interdisciplinary collaborations and opportunities in and out of the lab. The curriculum reflects this interdisciplinary perspective by also offering access to courses in other schools including Business, Education, and Law. Stanford faculty, alumni and staff offer trainees the mentoring and resources to succeed in a wide range of careers. The following SoM programs are also instrumental in enriching the research and training environment for fellows from all backgrounds:

- The Stanford Grant Writing Academy supports trainees in creating proposals and productive writing practice; teaches trainees to write and edit efficiently; empowers trainees to elicit and provide effective feedback; and provides coaching, editing, and review of proposals and scientific writing. The grant Writing Academy's award-winning Proposal Bootcamp is offered now online in the Spring term. Prior Proposal Bootcamp participants had almost double the proposal success rates as non-Bootcamp trainees.
- Postdoc Wellness Programs: OPA offers various workshops, series, and wellness-related events for postdocs throughout the year.
- The mission of the Student Outreach to Alumni Resources (SOAR) Mentor Program is to foster mentorship opportunities across the Stanford Biosciences community. This comprehensive mentoring program exposes postdocs to a breadth of career options and pathways, promoting greater community and collaboration with alumni.

Natalie Torok, MD

May 5, 2021

Page 5

- The Solidarity, Leadership, Inclusion, Diversity (SoLID) Mentorship Program connects trainees with faculty who can provide additional mentorship to guide and support students on issues that may be largely outside of their research, such as mental health and wellness, academic activism, microaggressions, and imposter syndrome, among others. Our multi-faceted mentoring approach allows trainees to be matched with peer and/or professional mentors of their choosing in addition to their faculty advisor. Trainees can opt to be matched with multiple mentors, thereby increasing the breadth of advice they receive.

**9. Ensuring that trainees will continue to be supported when they transition from the training grant to other sources of support.** The SoM covers all trainee expenses not provided by the training grant, including a stipend considerably higher than the training grant minimum to reflect the high cost of living in the Bay Area. There are funds to provide fellows the ability to carry out research in their lab of choice across all our Home Programs, so that students have the opportunity to pursue their passions in research topic and lab.

In summary, we share your enthusiasm for promoting the best possible research and training in the areas of Gastroenterology and Hepatology by facilitating and cementing interdepartmental and interschool ties among trainees and faculty in these areas. Thus, we support your application in the strongest possible terms, and we hope that the NIH will support this highly successful and innovative program.

Sincerely,



Lloyd B. Minor, MD