



Wake Forest University

School of Medicine

Pilot Studies Research Program Funding Announcement (RFA) Wake Forest Claude D Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC)

Theme: “*Integrating pathways affecting physical function for new approaches to disability treatment and prevention*”

**Due Dates: Letter of Intent (required)
Full Application**

**Friday, April 18, 2025
Friday, May 30, 2025**

The Wake Forest Pepper Pilot Studies Program promotes promising new research ideas by providing funds for generation of preliminary data for development of grant applications leading to external funding of larger, definitive studies. **Overall Objective:** to promote translational research to assess biological, behavioral, cognitive, genomic, metabolic, and other factors which contribute to age-related physical function decline, or progression to disability. **Key goal:** Facilitating the development and testing in clinical/pre-clinical studies of novel interventions targeting age-related decline in physical function to prevent/reverse progression to disability. The program funds full pilot studies, proposals with plans to add measures to existing studies, and exploratory analyses of existing databases and archived biofluid and tissue samples.

Innovative, multidisciplinary, geroscience-based, and translational approaches are encouraged, as are involvement of junior faculty as well as faculty from outside fields interested in aging research.

Examples include but are not limited to investigations of:

- Age-related changes to specific organ systems (e.g. cardiovascular, kidney, liver, immune system)
- Body composition phenotypes (muscle, fat, bone) and function
- Physical / cognitive function and/or their interrelationships in predicting patient-centered outcomes
- Brain-body interactions
- Peripheral and/or central nervous system
- Bioenergetics and mitochondrial function
- Biomarkers (biofluids, tissues, cells)
- Cellular senescence
- Health system implementation

Preliminary data are not required to be competitive. However, applications should include enough information to allow reviewers to determine the likelihood of success.

Eligibility Information

Basic science and clinical research projects are encouraged from investigators at Wake Forest associated campuses across the Medical Center and Reynolda communities, and can include collaborations with investigators within legacy Atrium Health and other institutions, particularly those with Pepper Centers.

Award Information

The Pepper Older Americans Independence Center is funded by a grant from the NIH. Pilot award budgets allowed up to \$25,000 for one year. The funds are expected to be spent over a 12 month period, but additional funds and time may be granted if needed and well justified.

Application Process

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Investigators must submit a 2 page LOI by **5:00 pm, Friday, April 19, 2025**. This mandatory requirement is pivotal to the process. **Early inquiries are encouraged.** LOIs will be reviewed for their relevance to the Wake Forest Pepper OAIC theme and adherence to LOI requirements. LOIs deemed to the most promising for generating important new information supporting subsequent grant applications with high likelihood of funding will be invited and provided guidance from Pilot Core leaders towards developing strong proposals.

If invited to submit an application, we encourage you to consult with Leaders of the Pilot and other Pepper Center Cores during preparation of your proposal. (See table on next page)

<u>Pepper Cores</u>	<u>Pepper Core Leaders</u>
Clinical Research Core (CRC)	Kristen Beavers, PhD / Jason Fanning, PhD
Biostatistics and Research Information Systems Core (BIC)	Iris Leng, PhD / Jaime Speiser, PhD
Integrative Biology Core (IBC)	Phil Kramer, PhD / Bumsoo Ahn, PhD
Bio Imaging Resource Core (BRC)	Leon Lenchik, MD / Christina Hugenschmidt, PhD / Ashley Weaver, PhD

LOIs requirements

- Descriptive title of proposed research
- Submitting Investigator: Name, institution, academic rank, e-mail address
- Co-Investigators: Name, institution, and academic rank
- Hypothesis, rationale, significance, aims, and relevance to the WF OAIC objectives and goals
- Description of study/plans
- Brief description of proposed allocation of funds

2. Complete Application on basis of LOI

If selected, you will be invited, within a week after the LOI deadline, to submit a complete pilot application. Individuals invited to apply must submit the full application by **5:00PM on Friday, May 30, 2025**. Application Submission Instructions & Guidelines will be included in this invitation.

The study should include

- A multi-disciplinary team including at least one team member from Wake Forest and / or Atrium Health.
- A commitment to use pilot data to develop a larger translational team-oriented grant application.
- Outline of how the proposed project moves a field forward toward addressing health care needs within the population.

Application Process Timeline

Letter of Intent* deadline: sent to Abby Archer	Friday, April 18, 2025 by 5:00 pm
<i>*You will be contacted within two weeks after LOI submitted to inform if you will proceed with full application, LOIs are welcomed earlier than the deadline for expedited responses and additional time to prepare application</i>	
Full Application deadline: submitted through REDCap	Friday, May 30, 2025 by 5:00 pm
Funding decisions communicated	August 2025

Budget Preparation

Support may be requested for technical staff salaries, testing, animals, supplies, and reagents. Modest effort for investigator support may be requested if needed.

Submission Procedure

Inquiries are strongly encouraged so that we can provide specific guidance in developing relevant and successful proposals. For additional information or clarification please contact

Dr. Tom Register (register@wakehealth.edu)
 Dr. Dalane Kitzman (dkitzman@wakehealth.edu)
 Dr. Tina Brinkley (tbrinkle@wakehealth.edu)

LOIs and administrative inquiries are to be directed to Abby Archer (aarcher@wakehealth.edu)