

Drs. Scott Hammer and Frank Lowy

Project Abstract

This is an application from the Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) for a post-doctoral training grant in Infectious Diseases entitled “Columbia Integrated Training Program in Infectious Disease Research (TP-IDR)”. Drs. Scott Hammer and Franklin Lowy will serve as principal investigators (PIs) under the multiple PI NIH model. Both are established investigators with complementary research interests and longstanding commitments to the training of new investigators. The goal of this proposal is to train post-doctoral fellows with MD, MD-PhD, or PhD degrees who are destined for academic infectious disease careers. The interdisciplinary program is designed to provide the necessary skillset to successfully pursue translational research whether this research be primarily basic or clinical/epidemiological. The recent dramatic advances in the fields of microbial genomics and biomedical informatics and the potential application of these rapidly evolving tools to translational research has necessitated a reappraisal of our approach to training new investigators. The recruitment to CUMC of a number of world class investigators (e.g., Dr. Megan Sykes, Director of the Center for Translational Immunology; Dr. Sandro Galea, Chair of Epidemiology; Dr. Sankar Ghosh, Chair of Microbiology & Immunology; Dr. Lisa Metsch, Chair of Sociomedical Sciences) add to the existing strengths of CUMC in Infectious Diseases, pathogen discovery (Dr. Ian Lipkin, Director of the Center for Infection and Immunity) and Biomedical Informatics (Dr. George Hripesak, Chair) and have allowed us to construct a Training Program that can meet the needs and challenges of the transformative era in translational research which we are experiencing. Drs. Hammer and Lowy will co-chair an Executive Steering Committee that will serve as the governing body. A Recruitment and Admissions Subcommittee will insure that our applicant pool is strong and diverse. A dynamic mix of well established and junior investigators has been assembled to form a close-knit, dedicated faculty. Trainees selected to the TP-IDR will have a choice of laboratory-based or clinical/epidemiological-based research projects and will have the option of obtaining a Masters degree in either Epidemiology or Biomedical Informatics. Didactic conferences and a new, TP-IDR developed seminar series will complement the educational experience. Mentorship, training, career development and bidirectional feedback will be thorough. Internal and External Advisory Committees will assist with oversight of the entire program. Institutional support is strong and broad-based. The intersection of microbial genomics and pathogenesis with clinical investigation, epidemiology and international health, along with the cross-cutting advances in biomedical informatics form the conceptual vision of the TP-IDR. This program will permit us to train the academic Infectious Disease leaders of the future.
