

ABSTRACT: 2015 ELAM Institution Action Project Poster Symposium

Project Title: *Putting the SeXXY in Research: A New Center for Sex and Gender in Health at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania*

Name and Institution:

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Collaborators: Tracy L. Bale, Ph.D.; Professor of Neuroscience; Penn School of Veterinary Medicine; Eve Higginbotham, M.D., Vice Dean for Inclusion and Diversity, Perelman School of Medicine; Anita Allen, J.D., Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, University of Pennsylvania

Background, Challenge or Opportunity: Despite the obvious sex or gender differences in the epidemiology and phenomenology of many health conditions affecting human populations, few research studies are designed to address their contribution to the pathophysiology or treatment of these conditions.

Purpose/Objectives: Through the promotion of cross-school, collaborative research with scientific and financial support for considering sex or gender in outcomes of interest, the Penn Center for Sex and Gender in Health will promote inter- and trans-disciplinary research that;

- 1) Meets the National Institutes of Health (NIH) mandates for inclusion with respect to sex and gender;
- 2) Leads to greater opportunities for additional NIH funding;
- 3) Enhances understanding of the role of sex and gender in personalized medicine.

Methods/Approach: Development of the Center has been a two-stage process to date. The first stage has been to establish among key stakeholders an understanding of the relevance of sex and gender in health-related research. The second stage will be to demonstrate the return on investment to support a greater financial commitment to the Center.

- **Stage 1 Activities and Accomplishments**

- *Meeting with Key Stakeholders:* Through discussions with leaders at the Provost and Dean offices, we have obtained pilot funding to support the Co-Director's (Epperson and Bale) efforts towards Center/Institute development.
- *Submitted application for the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH):* This federal source of funding could provide infrastructure support for the program and salary for 2 junior faculty whose research focuses on sex and gender in health.
- *Conduct survey of research protocols for focus on sex or gender:* We have initiated a collaboration with the Penn Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct a review of 100-200 research protocols approved within the previous year. The goal is to conduct a needs assessment and to develop standards for assessing the impact of our Center on inclusion of sex or gender in research when appropriate.

- **Stage 2 Activities and Accomplishments:**

- *Obtain ongoing support for the Center:* Working with the Provost Office and Development at Penn to create a source of on-going revenue.
- *Establish an internal Pilot Funding Program:* Pilot grants will enhance the quality of research in sex and gender and lead to greater external funding.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: Outcomes of interest are 1) the number of new research protocols that appropriately include sex or gender as moderators or outcomes, 2) the number of funded grants that result from Center input, 3) the amount of on-going support for the Center from internal and external sources.