The RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars
Lessons Learned During the 2012 Selection Process

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RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars - Purpose

• Develop the next generation of national leaders in academic nursing through career development awards for outstanding junior nursing faculty.

• Strengthen the academic productivity & overall excellence of nursing schools by providing mentorship, leadership training, salary & research support to young faculty
NFS Key Dates and Deadlines

• October 20, 2011 – Call for proposals launched
• February 7, 2012 – Proposals Deadline
• February 15 – March 23, 2012 – Proposals reviewed and scored by the NFS National Advisory Committee (NAC)
• April 11, 2012 – Notification of semi-finalists
• June 4-6, 2012 – NAC semi-finalist interviews
• June 15, 2012 – Notification of finalists
• September 1, 2012 – Appointments begin
Eligibility Criteria

- Registered nurse with a research doctorate in nursing or a related discipline.

- Junior faculty member in an accredited school of nursing in an academic position that could lead to tenure.
  - Junior faculty are defined as those who have been in a faculty position after completing their doctorate for at least two and no more than five years at the start of the program – anyone wanting to check eligibility for next year, please email: rwjfnfs@jhu.edu
  - Usually assistant professors

- Identify at least one senior leader in the school of nursing as an primary nursing mentor for academic career planning & access to organizations, programs & colleagues helpful to the candidate’s work as a Nurse Faculty Scholar.
Eligibility Criteria

- Identify at least one senior researcher in the university with similar or complementary research interests.
  - Strongly encouraged to be from a discipline outside of nursing
- Candidates must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. or territories at the time of application
- Candidates must not receive support from other research fellowships/traineeships at time they begin the program
- We embrace racial, ethnic and gender diversity and encourage applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds.

NOTE: Candidates can apply more than once.
Selection Criteria

• Evidence of potential for & strong *(long-term)* commitment to a full career as an academic nurse leader, with the capacity to achieve rank of full professor

• Evidence that nominating institution & its senior leadership are committed to supporting the candidate’s academic career and activities during the program

• Evidence of availability & commitment of qualified mentors & academic resources, including space as appropriate, at the candidate’s institution

• Evidence of potential to become a national leader in scholarly focus area.
Selection Criteria

• Evidence of potential to become a national leader in scholarly focus area.
• Evidence of commitment to teaching excellence.
• Evidence of commitment to racial, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in nursing
• Merit of candidate’s proposed research/scholarly plan
• Potential of the proposed research and scholarship area to serve as a foundation for the candidates academic career and contribution to: nursing science, interdisciplinary knowledge in a focus area; and improvement of health and health care in the U.S.
Submission Statistics – 2012

• 42 proposals submitted
• 41 proposals reviewed by the National Advisory Committee
• 20 semi-finalists selected for interview
• 12 finalists selected
Disqualification for Technical Compliance or Ineligibility

Eligibility:

- Applicant had less than 2 years or greater than 5 years in a tenure track, faculty position after having completed their doctorate as of the start of the program
- Be sure to call or write if any questions about eligibility

Technical Compliance:

- No applicants in 2011 were disqualified on the basis of not meeting technical compliance (e.g., not meeting page limits, letter missing)
Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

• Weaknesses in Proposal
  – Incongruence in proposal; disjointed research
  – Sample size too small with limited proposal scope/vision vs. research problem too ambitious
  – Protocol/s complicated and undeliverable
  – Weaknesses in Methodology
    • Challenges and barriers to conducting research and how will address not fully articulated
    • Poor articulation of methodology – e.g. failure to measure key concepts
  – Insufficient case as to the potential of this study as part of a program of research to improve health and healthcare in the United States (including direct clinical relevance of lab research)
    • Occasionally research was very limited – proposed study was more a pilot than substantive study
Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

• Weaknesses in Proposal (continued)

  – Insufficient specificity about research questions, methods, and data analysis
    • Unclear direction for research; no connection to one’s program of research
    • Insufficient logical connections among parts of proposal (e.g. questions/hypotheses and analysis)
Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

• Mentorship
  
  – Letters did not elaborate a clear commitment and/or detailed plan for mentorship
  – Lack of academic leadership demonstrated on biosketch of primary mentor
  – Poor match of research mentor to scholar – does not have to be exact but if not immediately apparent from biosketch, areas of match need to be articulated in letter and/or applicant’s narrative
  – Lack of research leadership of research mentor as demonstrated by publications, grantsmanship, and other benchmarks
Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

• Lack of Academic Leadership Potential
  – Lack of or limited publications on biosketch (dissertation not published)
  – Lack of prior small research funding and completion to publication
  – Limited research education and/or experience
  – Teaching goals non-specific; not well-described commitment to teaching
  – Unilateral focus on one element of leadership in academic nursing (e.g. research without attention to excellence in teaching)
Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

• Diversity
  – Application did not address sufficiently commitment to racial, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in nursing
    • Can be through committee membership, relevant organizational leadership, recruitment or retention activities of students &/or faculty, mentorship of minority faculty and/or students, &/or strong teaching in areas of culture, health disparities

• General Issues
  – Unclear institutional commitment
  – Not following guidelines of NIH biosketch in terms of publications
  – Missing documents such as a letter from a mentor or mentor CV
Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

• Weaknesses in Proposal

– Responses overly general - not concise, not providing specifics bearing on the question raised
– Poor articulation of plans for use of RWJF NFS resources for leadership development across domains in academic nursing
– Problems answering questions about the research plan (e.g. unable to articulate methodological challenges and potential solutions)
– Not having in-depth knowledge of background literature in one’s research area
– Problems in articulating rationale for design choices
– Lack of appreciation for prior nursing research in one’s area of expertise
– Nothing new or innovative in research – will become problem in securing future funding
– Insufficient scientific rationale for intervention
– Lack of understanding of evidence needed to translate research to policy
Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

- Mentorship
  - Non-research intensive environment without sufficient commitment from mentors
  - Mentors accomplished, but with limited experience in research focus
  - Mentors not well-funded or have no large funding experience
  - Mentors do not have active or currently funded research in proposal focus
Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

• Lack of Academic Leadership Potential
  – Unilateral focus on research to the exclusion of teaching or other aspects of academic leadership
  • Sounding as though anxious to “buy out of teaching” or get enough research funding so that not teaching anymore to any extent
  – Lack of teaching experience, especially without clear plan to become more active in teaching undergraduates as well as graduates
  – Lack of vision about career trajectory and goals in terms of
    • Academic leadership broadly – no clear passion about full spectrum of academic role
    • Where program of research is headed to improve health and health care in the U.S.
Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

• Diversity
  – Poor articulation of commitment and sensitivity to diversity issues that will shape the academic nursing role in the 21st century
    • Lack of understanding of student body and community context
    • Only concern for one’s own ethnic/racial group
    • Student and faculty recruitment and retention
    • Attention to diversity and cultural issues in research
    • Diversity and cultural issues in teaching
    • Lack of understanding of health inequities and role of social determinants of health
  – Not recognizing heterogeneity within racial groups
  – Failing to recognize that faculty in one’s institution needs diversity
Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

• Biosketch
  – Not in NIH format
  – Putting chapters and books under peer-reviewed section, putting in-prep manuscripts under publications – a no-no
Tips from Successful Candidates and Their Institutions

• Early Nomination
  - Candidates identified early so there is ample time to work with mentor for develop and polish application
  - Candidate may benefit from technical assistance during preparation of the proposal
  - Candidates are able to participate in December web conferences

• Internal Support for Proposal Development
  - Candidates and primary mentors benefit from an internal review process for feedback
  - Candidates draw on mentoring relationship early, and show evidence of successful mentoring relationships
Tips from Successful Candidates and Their Institutions

• Choosing the Right Mentor
  – Draw on mentoring relationship while developing proposal
  – Clearly articulate role and specifics if how mentee will be mentored (e.g. frequency of meetings, proposed outcomes)
  – Choosing mentor who will “stretch you,” beyond your dissertation
  – Get help from dean and primary mentor to choose an appropriate research mentor at your university
  – Research mentor funding and publications important
  – Letter of references from previous mentor that speaks to your progression; evidence that you use mentoring relationships well
Tips from Successful Candidates and Their Institutions

- Articulating one’s career path and potential for leadership
  - Articulating professional goals for the three-year scholarship and the future, making sure it reflects selection criteria
  - Obtaining input from one’s Dean and mentors on professional goals for teaching, research, and service so these are addressed in letters of support
  - Identify and provide evidence of one's personal leadership strength and evidence of leadership potential
Tips from Successful Candidates and Their Institutions

• Support for Proposal Development

  – Writing and re-writing, then revisiting to assess whether articulation of one’s career trajectory is clear; then revising with input of mentors
  – Proposals address the “So what?” question
  – Well-rounded in scholarship, practice, leadership, and service activities
  – Ability to connect dots between proposed research and impact on health of Americans, nursing science, interdisciplinary research, translating from bench to bedside practice with ability to show improved health outcomes
  – Solid research plan with societal value; well articulated and has relevance for health care and policy
  – Look at RWJF website for purposes of foundation, priority areas, etc. – remember they fund you!
  – Look at www.rwjfnursefacultyscholars.org – see what we brag about – our scholars, achievements, what our program might do for you
Tips from Successful Candidates and Their Institutions

• Interviewing
  – Obtaining input from those who have gone through this or a similar process
  – Conducting mock interview with an interdisciplinary team
  – Pay attention to presentation guidelines
  – Role play to build confidence
  – Dress professionally
  – Be poised and relaxed
Other Tips from the National Program Office

- Application Process
  - Review selection and eligibility criteria closely. Please verify with the National Program Office if you are not sure.
  - Provide ample guidance to proposed mentors and others writing letters to meet selection criteria.
  - Start early to avoid delays with online application technology.
  - Leave enough time to carefully check to make sure application meets technical requirements and all elements are included; double check after submitting.
  - Follow directions given on templates, especially in regard to uploading of PDF documents.
Other Tips from the National Program Office

• Interview Process
  – Be prepared to discuss limitations of research proposal.
  – Answer questions concisely (know when to put a period to your comments).
  – Give substantive answers to questions – use examples to make a point versus generalities.
  – Make sure responses are thoughtful answers to specific questions you are asked rather than rehearsed generalities.
Important Dates for 2012

- **October 27, 2012**: Launch of 2012 NFS CFP
- **February 12, 2013**: Due date for applications
- **June 17-19, 2013**: Semi-finalist interviews
- **September 1, 2013**: 2013 Grants begin

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