Summer Institute Program to Increase Diversity (SIPID): Genetic Epidemiology with a focus on Cardiovascular and other Heart, Lung, Blood, and Sleep Disorders

The primary objective of the Summer Institute in Genetic Epidemiology is to provide all-expense-paid training and mentoring to junior faculty and scientists from underrepresented minority groups and/or with a disability, so that they can competently and effectively develop independent research programs on cutting edge Heart, Lung, Blood, and Sleep (HLBS) disorders. This initiative to bring faculty and scientists particularly from minority groups into research is important because of the major public health burden of these diseases, especially in minority populations.

This Summer Institute program was designed to provide a working knowledge and appreciation for genetic epidemiology and bioinformatics and to integrate these skills with the Mentee’s substantive research interests in CVD and HLBS problems. It will (1) require participation in a 3-week Summer Institute during each of two summers, (2) require attending a 3-day mid-year meeting, and (2) involve long-term networking with a Mentor to advance one’s own research career. The Summer Institute dates are To Be Announced, 2011 for new cohorts and August 12-27th, 2010 for returning cohorts. There is one week of overlap in most summers.

Toward this mission, our objectives include:

1. To provide fundamental training in genetic epidemiology and bioinformatics, with an emphasis on hands-on learning in addition to pure didactic course work.
2. To advise and mentor the mentees during the following year in terms of career development for developing independent research plans dealing with HLBS disorders.
3. To help the mentees apply for independent career development research grants by taking full advantage of the extraordinary resources of the participating institutions and mentors.

One of the great strengths of this all-expense-paid program is that the vast resources and the rich research and training environment in the labs of the mentors will be available to all mentees. We believe that, by exposing our mentees to the full breadth and depth of the ongoing research programs and resources at the participating institutions, we are ensuring that our mentees will be fully integrated with the biomedical sciences in a very natural manner. The proposed Summer Institute program consists of three components.

Component 1: Training during the first summer session consists of

- Survey Lectures on Biostatistics, CVD, Epidemiology, Role of Behaviors in CVD, and labs on measurements of clinical phenotypes
- Lectures on fundamentals of genetic epidemiology

Component 2: Mentoring and career development throughout first year involves

- Continuing interactions with mentors through phone calls and e-mails
- Early planning of a research project and grant application
- Mid-year meeting for mock study section review of grants in progress

Component 3: Training during the second summer consists of

- Polishing / finalizing grant applications
- Mock Study Session
- Lectures in bioinformatics and in responsible conduct of research

Mentors: Faculty Mentors (M.D. and/or Ph.D.) are at Washington University in St. Louis and each has a strong track record of independent research grant support in the field of research. A list of Mentors with research descriptions is available. Each Mentor is committed to networking with the Mentees to enable them to develop their career plans in terms of Genetic Epidemiology, CVD, and HLBS research. Lead scientists from other institutions participate as guest faculty.