The Wisconsin Head & Neck Cancer SPORE Grant is soliciting applications:

Career Enhancement Program (CEP)

The ultimate objective of the Wisconsin Head and Neck SPORE Grant (PI: Paul Harari, MD) is to advance translational research to improve the outcome for Head and Neck Cancer (HNC) patients. The University of Wisconsin holds one of the few funded H&N SPORE Grants in the United States. The **UW H&N SPORE Career Enhancement Program** seeks to support junior investigators, including physician scientists, to meet the challenge for innovation in methods to prevent, diagnose and advance treatment options for patients with HNC.

The CEP represents an essential component of the Wisconsin H&N SPORE's overarching goal to *advance translational research in head and neck oncology.* Intensifying translational research requires expansion of the pool of independent investigators who possess the knowledge and training to promote research from bench to bedside. This program will foster the development of knowledge, skills, professional attitudes, and experience required for successful academic careers in HNC translational research. For more information please see https://hn-spore.wisc.edu, which includes descriptions of the Wisconsin H&N SPORE three research projects, examples of pilot awards and core resources uniquely available to pilot applicants, eg: HNC cell lines, PDX, TMA, and biostatistical support.

PROJECT PERIOD: Aug. 1, 2024– Jul. 31, 2025
Simple LOI: **Due Apr 15, 2024:** submit online
Full Application: **Due May 1, 2024:** submit application online

FUNDING LEVELS (1 year): Applicants may request $10K, $25K or $50K, as appropriate for the scope of the research aims. The HN SPORE Pilot Review Committee will carefully consider the scope and potential of each application to recommend funding support levels. Highly successful awards may compete for a 2nd year of funding (same application process).

ELIGIBILITY: Funds from this program will support Assistant Professors in Wisconsin who wish to develop their careers in translational research in Head and Neck Cancer.

The SPORE program places special emphasis on recruiting women and individuals from under-represented backgrounds. Final recommendations for funding will be made by the HN SPORE Pilot Review Committee.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Assistant Professor (tenure-track, CHS, Research)
- Have minimum of 1 day/week protected time dedicated to translational HNC research
- Have no current or previous NIH R01 or equivalent funding in HNC research (K award is fine)
- Have experienced faculty mentor(s)[1] with a research focus in HNC
- Have not received a prior HN SPORE pilot within 2 years (except in cases of competitive renewal)[2]

LETTER OF INTENT (submit online)
We request a simple, 1-2 sentence description of proposal theme, along with a list of anticipated collaborators. Information provided is used to identify appropriate reviewers based on project theme.

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[1] *To emphasize translational research career development,* ***dual mentorship is welcome,*** *for example one mentor a basic scientist and another mentor a HNC clinician.*

[2] *Prior recipients of H&N SPORE pilot funding are welcome to reapply, however there must be a 2 year gap between completion of prior funding and new application. For example, a 2022 pilot award recipient who earned a 2023 renewal is funded through 2024 and would therefore become eligible for new HN SPORE application in 2026.*

APPLICATION FORMAT (submit online)

- **Scientific Abstract**
- **Lay Abstract** (to be included on website, if awarded)
- **NIH format Biosketch** for applicant, mentor(s), co-investigators (see NIH template)
- **Research Strategy** (limit 4 pages)
  - Specific aims
  - Background and significance (include summary of progress if competing renewal)
  - Innovation and approach
  - Anticipated results and implications
- **References Cited**
- **Applicant Career Goals & Interests** in HNC Translational Research (Limit 500 words)
- **Budget** (see template for restrictions)
- **Budget Justification (Please use example template):**
  - Specific description of how the $10K, $25K or $50K award will be used.
  - If full project costs exceed $50,000, please indicate how remaining costs will be covered (matching funds or otherwise).
- **Letter(s) of Support** (One mentor letter required, others are optional)

  Mentor letter(s) require descriptions of:
  1. research qualifications and previous experience as a research supervisor;
  2. plan that describes the nature of the supervision and mentoring that will occur during the proposed award period;
  3. plan for career progression for the candidate to move to an independent research investigator status during the project period of the award; and
  4. plan for monitoring the candidate's research, publications, and progression towards independence.
- **Verification of Department Support** (attestation on form in place of formal letter of support)
- **Verification of Resources and Environment**
  - Simple verification noting the study team has access to all the necessary unique equipment and resources required to complete the aims of the project.
- **Assurances:** Biosafety, human subjects and animal care protocol documentation
  - Indicate the status of protocols for vertebrate animals, human subjects and research involving recombinant DNA technologies.
  - IRB approved is not required at time of submission but must be approved before funds can be released. *Please expect IRB approvals to take 4+ months for new studies.*
  - If you are proposing research using human subjects, please contact Shari Piaskowski well before application deadline, since additional forms are needed.

Thank you for your interest and involvement with the Wisconsin H&N SPORE Grant. Please visit our website to find more information regarding HNC research projects, previously awarded HN SPORE pilots, and resources available from the HN SPORE Biostats and Pathology/Biospecimen Cores at https://hn-spore.wisc.edu.

Please direct inquiries to Shari Piaskowski, the HNC SPORE Administrator: smpiasko@wisc.edu, (608) 263-6686.

SCORING CRITERIA: Proposals must be focused on H&N Cancer to be eligible for funding support.
Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:

1) Overall Impact
2) Significance
3) Innovation
4) Approach
5) Environment
6) Investigator and Mentor
7) Potential for Translation

AWARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS:
Upon receipt of an award, awardees will receive an overview of all program obligations and agree to satisfy the requirements of the program prior to release of the award. Specifically, applicants will be required to:

- Develop a curriculum plan with advice from their mentor(s) that describes planned HNC research and education activities that may include educational courses, meetings, lectures, etc. to expand their knowledge and ability to perform translational HNC cancer research.
- Present a research summary once per year at a meeting with their mentor(s) and the SPORE CEP Executive Committee to evaluate progress.
- Submit an interim (Jan 31st) and annual (May 1) progress report.

Program-Relevant Seminars and Meetings:
Awardees are encouraged to attend H&N SPORE and other HNC-related forums to gain knowledge and build collaborations. Contact Shari Piaskowski for meeting times and locations.

- ***HNC SPORE meetings*** **- monthly SPORE translational research meeting (2nd Thursday of each month from 4-5pm), HNC SPORE retreat TBD**
- *UW Head & Neck Oncology Tumor Board* – This weekly multidisciplinary meeting includes prospective case discussions as well as educational presentations. (Wednesdays, 6:30am WebEx)
- *UW Head & Neck Disease Oriented Team (DOT*) – reviews HNC clinical trial activity, provides ongoing planning for new investigator-initiated trials and determines trial priorities.
- *Grand Rounds* – UWCCC and the Department of Surgery each sponsor a weekly grand rounds lecture series. Sessions focused on HNC should be attended.
- *Journal Clubs and Other Seminar Series* – (ICTR Lunch and Learn, Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar, McArdle Cancer Biology Series, Immunology Seminar Series) as relevant to their research and the broader field of HNC or translational research topics.