

The RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars Lessons Learned during the 2010 Selection Process

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Nurse Faculty Scholars



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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

- **November 3, 2009** – Formal Launch –Call for Proposals (CFP) Sent, Websites live
- **February 2, 2010 – 3 p.m. EST** – Deadline for receipt of applications
- **February 12 – March 12, 2010** – Proposals reviewed and scored by members of the National Advisory Committee (NAC)
- **April 7, 2009** – Notification of semi-finalist status
- **May 3-5, 2010** – Semi-finalist interviews with national advisory committee
- **May 7, 2010** – Notification of finalist status
- **September 1, 2010** – 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
 - 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 (Continued)

- 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 US 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.

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 United States.

Submission Statistics – 2009-10

- 50 proposals submitted
- 49 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 2009 were disqualified on the basis of not meeting technical compliance

Non-Advancement to Semi-finalist

- Weaknesses in Proposal

- Weakness 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
- 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.

- **Lack of academic leadership potential demonstrated on biosketch of applicant**

- Lack of publications (dissertation not published)
- Lack of prior small research funding and completion to publication

Non-Advancement to Semi-finalist, continued

- 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
- Unilateral focus on one element of leadership in academic nursing (e.g. research without attention to excellence in teaching)
- 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

- Poor articulation of commitment and sensitivity to diversity issues that will shape the academic nursing role in the 21st century
 - student and faculty recruitment and retention
 - attention to diversity and cultural issues in research
 - diversity and cultural issues in teaching
- 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
- 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

Non-advancement to Finalist, continued

- Problems answering questions about the research plan (e.g. unable to articulate methodological challenges and potential solutions)
- 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 United States

Tips from Successful Candidates and their Institutions

Early Nomination

- Candidates identified early so there as 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 early while developing proposal
- Clearly articulate the role and specifics of how mentee will be mentored (e.g. frequency of meetings, proposed outcomes)
- Choosing a mentor who will “stretch you”, someone beyond your dissertation
- Get help from the dean and primary mentor to choose an appropriate research mentor at your university
- letter of references from a previous mentor that speaks to the candidate's progression; evidence that the candidate uses mentoring relationships well

Tips from Successful Candidates and their Institutions

Articulating one's career path and potential for leadership

- Articulating professional goals for the 3 year scholarship and the future
- 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
- Being well rounded in scholarship, practice, leadership, and service activities
- Ability to connect the dots between proposed research and the 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

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 a interdisciplinary team
- Role play to build confidence
- Dress professionally
- Be poised and relaxed
- Pay attention to presentation guidelines

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 Grantmaking Online 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, continued

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 2011

November 1, 2010: Anticipated launch of 2011 NFS CFP

Late February 2010: Anticipated due date for applications

May 2011: Semi-finalist interviews

September 1, 2011: 2009 Grants begin

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