

# RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

## Lessons Learned During the 2014 Selection Process

Presented by  
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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

# RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars National Program Office (NPO)

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# RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

## National Advisory Committee

- **Angela Barron McBride, PhD, RN, FAAN, Chair**  
Distinguished Professor, Emerita (Former Dean), Indiana University School of Nursing
- **Cindy Anderson, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Educational Innovation, Ohio State University  
College of Nursing
- **Richard L. Bucciarelli, MD**  
Chair and Professor, University of Florida School of Medicine
- **José F. Cordero, MD, MPH, FAAP**  
Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Puerto Rico
- **Elaine Larson, PhD, RN, FAAN, CIC**  
Associate Dean for Research and Professor, Columbia University School of Nursing
- **Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
Chief Executive Officer, National League for Nursing

# RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

## National Advisory Committee (continued)

- **Spero Manson, PhD**  
Distinguished Professor and Center Director, Centers for American Indian and Alaskan Native Health, University of Colorado Denver
- **Mario Pacheco, MD**  
Director, Northern New Mexico Family Practice Residency Program, University of New Mexico School of Medicine
- **Nilda P. Peragallo, DrPH, RN, FAAN**  
Dean and Professor, University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies
- **Daniel J. Pesut, PhD, RN, PHMH, CNS-BC, FAAN**  
Professor of Nursing, Katherine R. and C. Walton Lillehei Chair in Nursing Leadership, University of Minnesota School of Nursing
- **Kristen Swanson, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
Dean, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing

# RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars

## National Advisory Committee (continued)

- **Linda Thompson-Adams, DrPH, RN, FAAN**

Associate Vice Chancellor for University Outreach, Professional Development and Distance Education, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

- **Nancy Fugate Woods, PhD, RN, FAAN**

Professor and Dean Emeritus, University of Washington School of Nursing


# 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 and overall excellence of nursing schools by providing mentorship, leadership training, salary and research support to young faculty


# NFS Key Dates and Deadlines

- **October 15, 2013** – Call for proposals launched
- **February 12, 2014** – Proposals Deadline
- **February 21 – March 28, 2014** – Proposals reviewed and scored by the NFS National Advisory Committee (NAC)
- **April 23, 2014** – Notification of semi-finalists
- **June 2-4, 2014** – NAC semi-finalist interviews
- **June 12, 2014** – Notification of finalists
- **September 1, 2014** – Appointments begin

40 YEARS OF IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

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**Nurse Faculty Scholars**



2013 Call for Applications

**Application Deadline**  
February 12, 2013

# 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.
- Candidates must not receive support from other research fellowships and/or traineeships at time they begin the program.
- Because they already have demonstrated research expertise, former or current principal investigators on an NIH R01 research project or the equivalent are not eligible to apply.
- Identify at least one senior leader in the school of nursing as a primary nursing mentor for academic career planning and access to organizations, programs and 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 United States or territories at the time of application.
- We embrace racial, ethnic and gender diversity and encourage applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds.

# Selection Criteria

- Evidence of potential for and 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 and its senior leadership are committed to supporting the candidate's academic career and activities during the program.
- Evidence of availability and commitment of qualified mentors and 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 (continued)

- 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 – 2014

- 56 proposals submitted
- 55 proposals reviewed by the National Advisory Committee
- 21 semi-finalists selected for interview
- 12 finalists selected

# Disqualification for Technical Compliance or Ineligibility

## Eligibility:

- Candidate had less than 2 years or greater than 5 years in a faculty position that could lead to tenure after having completed their doctorate as of the start of the program

## Technical Compliance:

- No candidates in 2014 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
  - *“Outcomes seemed weak, too broad”*
  - *“Seemed to be totally switching topics from dissertation without good rationale”*
  - *“Description of the study, intervention and actual procedures confusing”*
- Abstract non-substantive
  - *“Abstract should contain summary of details of methods such as sample size”*
- Lack of justification for sample size – e.g. power analysis for quantitative aims; lack of sample size justification for qualitative analysis
- Sample size too small with limited proposal scope/vision; must be substantive research proposal
  - *“Too narrow scholarly approach and structure of research”*
  - *“Unlikely to add anything substantively new”*
  - *“Only one school... (or one hospital)...being studied therefore limiting scope”*

# Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

- **Weaknesses in Proposal** (continued)
  - Protocol/s complicated and undeliverable
    - *“Great idea for project, but poorly designed”*
    - *“Proposal is reasonable, but contains many different surveys and scores, not sure how they fit together”*
    - *“Intervention underspecified; applicant fails to consider other, existing interventions of a similar nature”*
  - Insufficient case as to potential of study as part of research program to improve health and healthcare or create a culture of health in the United States (including direct clinical relevance of lab research)
    - *“Lack of clear vision of potential impact of the research”*
  - Weaknesses in methodology
    - Challenges and barriers to conducting research and how will address not fully articulated – e.g. selection bias or high risk of loss to follow-up
    - Poor articulation of methodology *“lacked methodological detail”*
    - *“Aims don't stand alone without considerable explanation.”*

# Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

- Weaknesses in Proposal (continued)

- Insufficient specificity about questions, methods, and data analysis
- i
- Insufficient logical connections among parts of proposal (e.g. prior research, conceptual framework, questions/hypotheses, methods and analysis)
  - *“Proposal does not explain the work and tools utilized”*
- Failure to substantiate use of key measures (e.g., with psychometric stats, citations to use in similar populations or for similar purposes) and to explain any conceptual/theoretical models introduced and how used in the research
- Failure to have read, synthesized and/or fails to acknowledge relevant prior research from all disciplines so that this research is a logical next step - not a repeat of already completed research -
- Some aspects seemed to be an illogical add-on – e.g. genetics/genomics because a current nursing research topic not because it was logical within study proposed or addition of cost-effectiveness analysis or “big data” (EMR’s) or certain physiological measures without good integration into proposal & prior research in field or without plan to get skills to add



# Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

## • Mentorship

- Letters did not elaborate a clear commitment and/or detailed plan for mentorship (communications, meetings, mentoring activities)
  - *“Lack of clarity of roles in mentors’ letters”*
  - *“Mentors also have rich professional experience, but do not seem to have the methodological rigor”*
- Lack of academic leadership demonstrated on biosketch of primary mentor
  - *“Uncertainty if proposed mentors can guide applicant through the process of getting external grants and developing career”*
- Poor match of research mentor to scholar – does not have to be exact but if not apparent from biosketch, areas of match need to be articulated in letter and/or candidate’s narrative
- Lack of research leadership of research mentor as demonstrated by publications, grantsmanship, and other benchmarks
  - *“Mentors without current/recent funding experience”*

# Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

- **Lack of Academic Leadership Potential**

- Lack of or limited publications on biosketch (dissertation not published)
  - *“Few publications and/or not enough (e.g., only 1-2) as first-author”*
  - *“None of preliminary studies cited published nor accepted for publication”*
- 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)
- Lack of indication of academic research plans after award

# Non-Advancement to Semi-Finalist

- **Diversity**

- Application did not address sufficiently commitment to racial, ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in nursing
  - Is not reflective of RWJF mission and vision
  - Can be through committee membership, relevant organizational leadership, recruitment or retention activities of students and/or faculty, mentorship of minority faculty and/or students, and/or strong teaching in areas of culture, health disparities
  - Research proposal is not attentive to issues of diversity &/or health inequities throughout the research process – all steps
  - *“Does not describe attention to diversity in proposal”*

- **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 – Application

## • Weaknesses in Proposal

- Responses overly general - not concise, not providing specifics
- Poor articulation of plans for use of RWJF NFS resources for leadership development across domains in academic nursing
  - *“How will NFS help shape your career goals?”*
  - *“What are your research goals beyond NFS?”*
- Problems answering questions about the research plan
  - *“What’s your theoretical framework & how will you link to your study”*
- Nothing new or innovative in research – will become problem in securing future funding
  - *“What big question do you want to answer?”*
- Insufficient scientific rationale for intervention
  - *“How will your research advance nursing science?”*
- Lack of understanding of evidence needed to translate research to policy
- Lack of sufficient potential of impact of study
- “Atheoretical” or inappropriate theory
- Not enough reflection on IOM Future of Nursing Recommendations or RWJF’s Culture of Health
- Translational Components
  - Not able to clearly articulate translation from biological/behavioral/individual to wider clinical care/population care/culture of health

# Non-Advancement to Finalist – Application

- **Mentorship**
  - Non-research intensive environment without sufficient commitment from mentors
  - Mentors accomplished, but either not senior in SON (primary mentor) or case not made for research mentor's area of research match with applicant
  - Research mentors not well-funded or have no large funding experience
  - Research mentors do not have good publication record

# 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
    - *“How do you (plan to) balance research, teaching, and service?”*
  - 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
    - 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
    - *Could not identify how NFS will advance their career*
    - *Could not answer “What will you be an expert in in 10 years?”*
    - *Could not identify a nursing role model*

# Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

- **Diversity**

- Poor articulation of commitment and sensitivity to diversity (gender, race/ethnicity) issues to shape academic nursing role in 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Lack of understanding of student body and community context
  - 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
  - *Could not answer well what diversity means to you and your project*
  - *“No evidence of involvement in diversity initiatives at institution”*
  - *“Could not describe how was addressing diversity in research role or educator role”*
- Not recognizing heterogeneity within racial groups
- Not able to define how culture/diversity affects study all aspects of research process

# Non-Advancement to Finalist – Interview Issues

- **Inability to Answer Broader-View Questions**

- Perceived benefits of NFS program:
  - *“What can NFS give you that you can’t get at your home university?”*
- View of future role as academic nurse leader:
  - *“As a 21<sup>st</sup> Century nursing leader, how do SON faculty need to change?”*
  - *“How do/will you pay it forward?”*
  - *“How will your work impact health care policy and practice on a national level?”*
  - *“What global role should nursing have in the future?”*
- Work with interdisciplinary teams:
  - *“What lessons have you learned?”*
  - *“What do you bring as a nurse to interdisciplinary teams?”*
  - *“What ‘s an active ingredient for engaging stakeholders?”*



# Tips from Successful Candidates and Their institutions (continued)

- **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 (continued)

- **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.rwjfnursefaculty.com](http://www.rwjfnursefaculty.com) – see what we brag about – our scholars, achievements, what our program might do for you

# 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 (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.
- Be prepared to discuss the entirety of your future role as academic nurse leader.

# Updates from RWJF

- **Four New RWJF Programs – to start in 2015**
  - New Clinical Scholars
  - Interdisciplinary Culture of Health Research Leaders
  - Diversity in Health Policy Research
  - Multi-Sector Leaders for Health
- **RWJF Programs Not Closing**
  - Future of Nursing Scholars
  - Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program
  - Health Policy Fellows
- **Active RWJF Call for Proposals**
  - Designing the Next Generation of Human Capital Programs – due July 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Public Health Services and Systems Research – due July 23
  - Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization - Open
  - Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization: Small Grants - Open

*Sign up for RWJF Funding Alerts:* <http://www.rwjf.org/services/>