Proposal ID: 143

Name of proposed new unit, OR Title of submission: Sarver Heart Center

Name of contact person for this proposal: Carol Gregorio, Ph.D.
Contact person title: Professor, Co-Director

Contact address:
1656 E. Mabel, MRB room 315
MS #245218
Tucson, AZ 85724

Contact Phone: 520-626-8113

Contact Email: gregorio@email.arizona.edu

List the name, title, and Unit/Department/College of each member of the team that developed the proposal:
Gordon Ewy, M.D.
Professor & Chief, Cardiology
Director, University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center
UA College of Medicine

Carol Gregorio, Ph.D.
Co-Director, University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center
Director, Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program
Professor, Cell Biology & Anatomy
Professor, Molecular & Cellular Biology
UA College of Medicine

List the current units (including the academic programs) that will be reorganized/consolidated:
Sarver Heart Center of Excellence
Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program (Theme)
University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center
White Paper on Reorganization
October 13, 2008

The purpose of this “white paper” is two fold. The first is to present cogent reasons why the Arizona Regents approved Center of Excellence, the Sarver Heart Center, like the Arizona Cancer Center, and the Steel Memorial Children’s Center should not be included in the suggested placement of many of the centers into a proposed, “Institute.” The second is to present reasons why the Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program should be officially placed into the Sarver Heart Center.

PART I

I. Introductory Statement

Firmly founded on the academic pillars of research, education, and service, the goal of The University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center is to help the University of Arizona fulfill its mission of improving the quality of life of the citizens of Arizona, with discoveries and innovations that are transported worldwide. Since the major cause of death and therefore a major cause of disability of the citizens of Arizona is cardiovascular (heart, vascular, stroke) disease, the Sarver Heart Center is essential to the mission of the University of Arizona. The Sarver Heart Center has and will continue to strengthen the cardiovascular component of each of the Departments of the College of Medicine. We will continue our cooperation with the Steel Childrens Center, as it relates to developmental and congenital heart diseases.

II. Highlighted Accomplishments

The Sarver Heart Center has gained national and international prominence for its clinical, translational and basic research.

Clinically, the Cardiovascular Services has been ranked in US News and World Report higher than other disciplines at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center.

In translational research, our contributions to Cardiocerebral Resuscitation, Cardiac Transplantation, Total Artificial Heart and Cardiac Perfusionist Programs are national and internationally renowned.

In Basic Research, we have excelled most recently due to our cooperation with the Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program (see Part II addressing this issue).

In fund raising, we raised funding not only for the present Sarver Heart Center Building, but also for ten endowed chairs—far more than any other unit at the Arizona Health Sciences Center.

The funding for research within the Sarver Heart Center is not apparent as the research space within the Sarver Heart Center building is very limited. Therefore, since research space for the majority of our member’s is provided by other departments, and in the Medical Research Building, the overhead and therefore the “credit” is accounted for by the individual members’ departments. Publications of our members are also credited to the individual’s department, and accordingly to count research income and publications of Sarver Heart Center’s members would be “double reporting.”

Vital Public Outreach: One of the strengths of the Sarver Heart Center is its proven, demonstrated commitment to public education in the areas of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, and
vascular disease. Members of the Sarver Heart Center provide a network of statewide clinical outreach programs. These clinics provide specialized medical care and a unique high volume teaching environment for medical students and residents. These programs, begun decades ago include: 1) Cardiac Transplant Clinic for Phoenix-area patients for evaluation and follow-up services; 2) Pediatric Cardiology Clinics throughout Southern Arizona, including Yuma, Nogales, Sierra Vista, Casa Grande, Douglas and Safford; and 3) a statewide and southwest regional Native American Cardiology Program, which has been nationally recognized for its excellence.

III. Goals

Our goals for the next few years is to increase support for the basic science research related to cardiovascular disease and do our best to help “save” clinical academic cardiovascular disease and stroke by continuing to raise endowments to attract and retain world class academic individuals and to continue our excellent clinical program and translational research programs.

We will continue to focus on raising money for equipment and startup research grants for members of the Sarver Heart Center. Priority is given to teams that are made up of basic and clinical scientists to enhance the potential for successful translational research.

Because the expansion of the academic clinical faculty has diluted state support to the point that it is no longer a factor in retention or in recruiting world class clinical faculty, we must continue our efforts of raising funds for endowments. These activities are essential to our goal of building a world-class and diverse academic community at the forefront of discovery.

We will continue our outreach educational efforts to the people of the State of Arizona, and continue to provide the very best academic and educational environment for patient care.

IV. Name Recognition is Important to Fund Raising

It is obvious that with the increasing number of units within the Arizona Health Sciences Center, there is a significant problem with name recognition that interferes with fund raising efforts for the University of Arizona Foundation. For example, many patients give money to University Medical Center, thinking it is supporting Cardiovascular Disease. They do not know the difference between UMC, UPH and the other units within the University of Arizona. Adding another institute will add to the confusion, and could harm rather than help our fund raising efforts.

PART 2

I. Proposed Reorganization

The Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program (theme) has been extraordinarily successful in recruiting new faculty and in total grant support and scholarly activity of its members. It has attracted national and international attention in the field of cardiovascular biology, and has been enthusiastically embraced by the community of benefactors supporting basic and clinical cardiovascular research. This success has derived from excellent leadership and a close relationship with the Sarver Heart Center.

As part of the transformation process, we propose to consolidate the current Molecular Cardiovascular Research program (MCRP) into the Sarver Heart Center. This formal consolidation would provide the perfect synergy to foster the continued growth of both units’ efforts to advance the University’s Strategic Plan Initiatives and the Sarver Heart Center’s mission. Without this consolidation, the Program will take a significant step back in efforts to perform world-class translational research and in our ability to perform development activities. We have also initiated efforts to integrate the Cardiovascular Investigators in the COM-Phoenix into a new proposed translational MCRP branch of
Sarver Heart Center. With the formal integration of the MCRP and the Sarver Heart Center, this effort would continue and expand. We also welcome integrating the scientists in the Diabetes Research Program, if there were sufficient interest by their members. For more information on the MCRP, please see the website at: http://www.mcrp.med.arizona.edu/.

II. Integration of the Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program into the Sarver Heart Center

Our Program is a success story, primarily because of the resources and support provided by the Sarver Heart Center. Notably,

Within the last two years, we successfully paired resources from Bio5, three separate cross-campus departments (Cell Biology and Anatomy, Molecular and Cellular Biology, and Physiology), as well as the Sarver Heart Center to bring in 5 new investigators.

The six senior and two junior investigators in our program are currently bringing in ~3.6 million dollars (direct), which is more than many departments are bringing in.

In a short time, the MCRP has been very successful at philanthropy - bringing in resources to provide graduate student fellowships, contributions to start-up packages and equipment that benefit all investigators at the UofA. A significant number of philanthropic “relationships” have been established and are predicted to allow us to grow rapidly, with less dependence on state funds.

We essentially filled the MRB 3rd floor (one lab open) and filled one lab of the MRB 4th floor (as a way to integrate the MCRP and the Diabetes groups) with active, highly interactive and well-funded investigators, spanning a wide range of interdisciplinary approaches. Now, our goal is to hire additional members of our program who will set up their laboratories in the recently vacated 6th floor of the Sarver Heart Center.

III. The Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program should not be Incorporated into a Department

We currently have members of three departments and plan to co-hire with other Departments in the near future (e.g., with the Dept. of Medicine and/or Surgery). In fact, we have excelled in creating a truly interdisciplinary Program, since we have not been constrained by a single department’s needs with respect to hiring.

Expectations to former donors who gave funds to build our program, and future fund raising efforts would both be severely compromised. Clearly the MRCP-Sarver Heart Center axis has been successful in fund raising and it is unwise to alter this successful formula.

By not being incorporated into a single department, we will be most successful in establishing “translational” research and having fruitful clinical collaborations.

Prepared by: Dr. Gordon A. Ewy, MD (Director of the Sarver Heart Center) and Dr. Carol Gregorio, PhD (Co-Director of the Sarver Heart Center and Director of the Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program) with input from the Executive Committee of the Sarver Heart Center (meeting 10/9/08), members of the Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program, and various donors including members of the Sarver family.
Budget:
The amount of state support to the Sarver Heart Center is minimal and appropriately used. The Molecular Cardiovascular Research Program does not receive any direct state dollars. Therefore, consolidation of the two programs has no financial penalty. This proposal is focused on maintaining and excelling in fund-raising (e.g., Endowment) efforts that have and will continue to benefit The University of Arizona as a whole.