



Research Centers in Minority Institutions  
Translational Research Network

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**Collaborative Research Activities**  
**Translational Research Cluster System**  
**RTRN Small Grants Program**

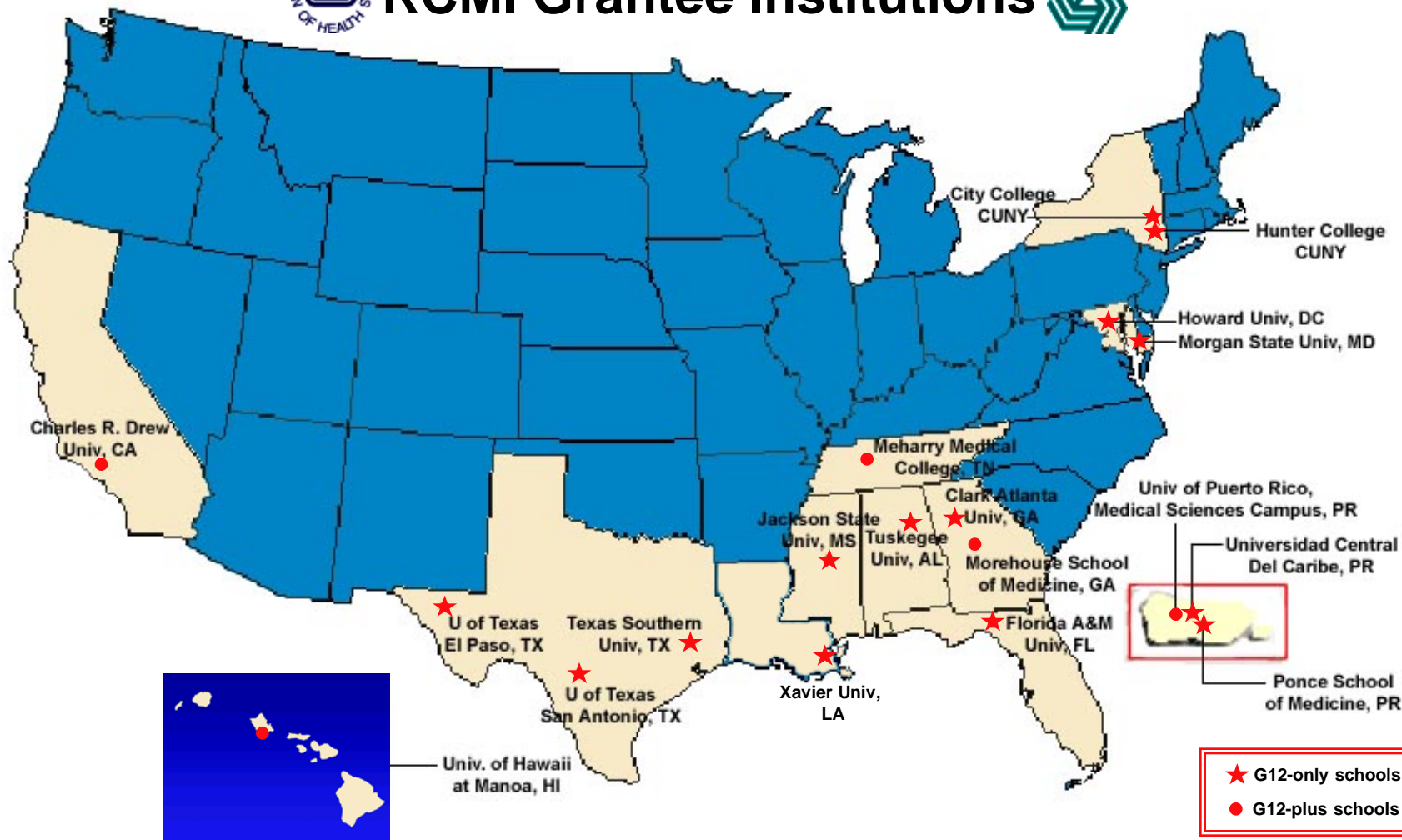
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*RTRN Project Manager*



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## RCMI Grantee Institutions



- ★ G12-only schools
- G12-plus schools

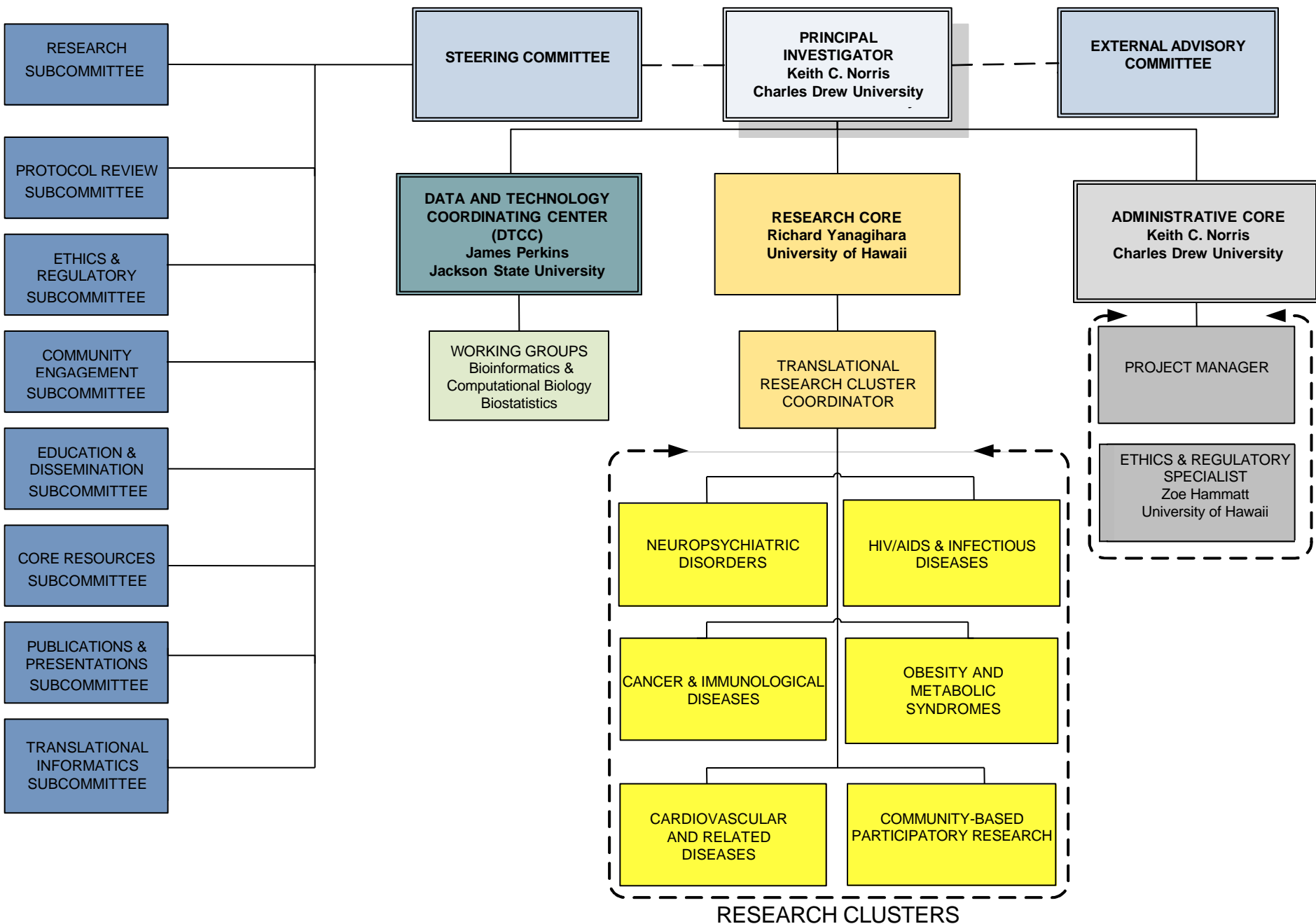
RTRN is supported by grant number U54RR022762 from the National Center for Research Resources, National Institutes of Health (NIH). This grant also receives co-funding from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, NIH.



## Challenges and Barriers to Collaborative Science

Insufficiently detailed directory of investigators  
Inadequately developed technology infrastructure  
Geographic separation and time-zone differences  
Entrenched silo-science research culture  
Unfamiliarity with translational science spectrum  
Competing priorities and time demands

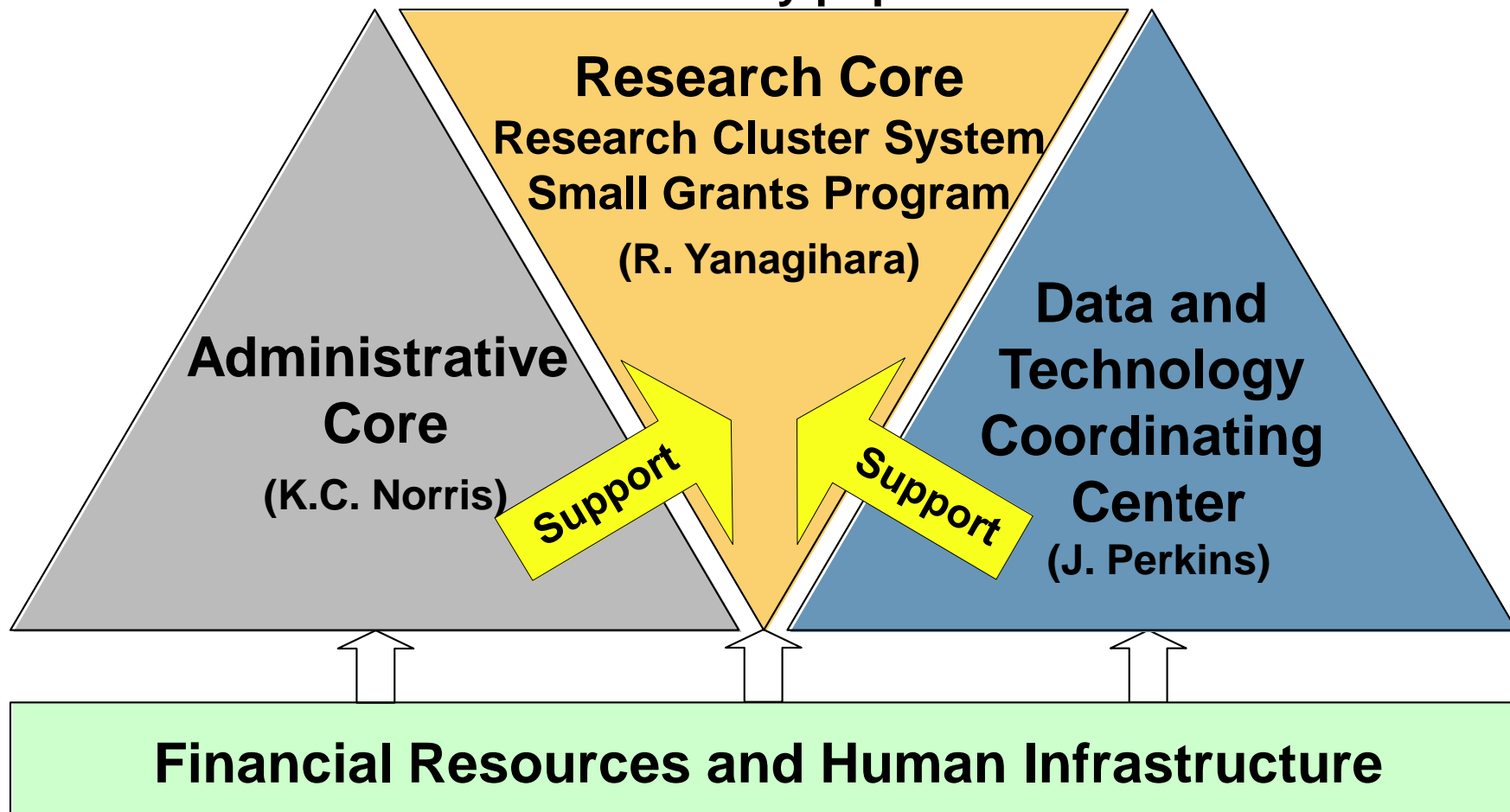
# RCMI TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK (RTRN) ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





# Research Centers in Minority Institutions Translational Research Network

**Unifying goal: to reduce and eliminate health disparities in underserved and ethnic minority populations across America.**





## **Translational Research Cluster System**

### Objective:

To facilitate the conduct of inter-institutional, cross-disciplinary translational research collaborations among investigators at the 18 RCMI grantee institutions.

### Specific Aims:

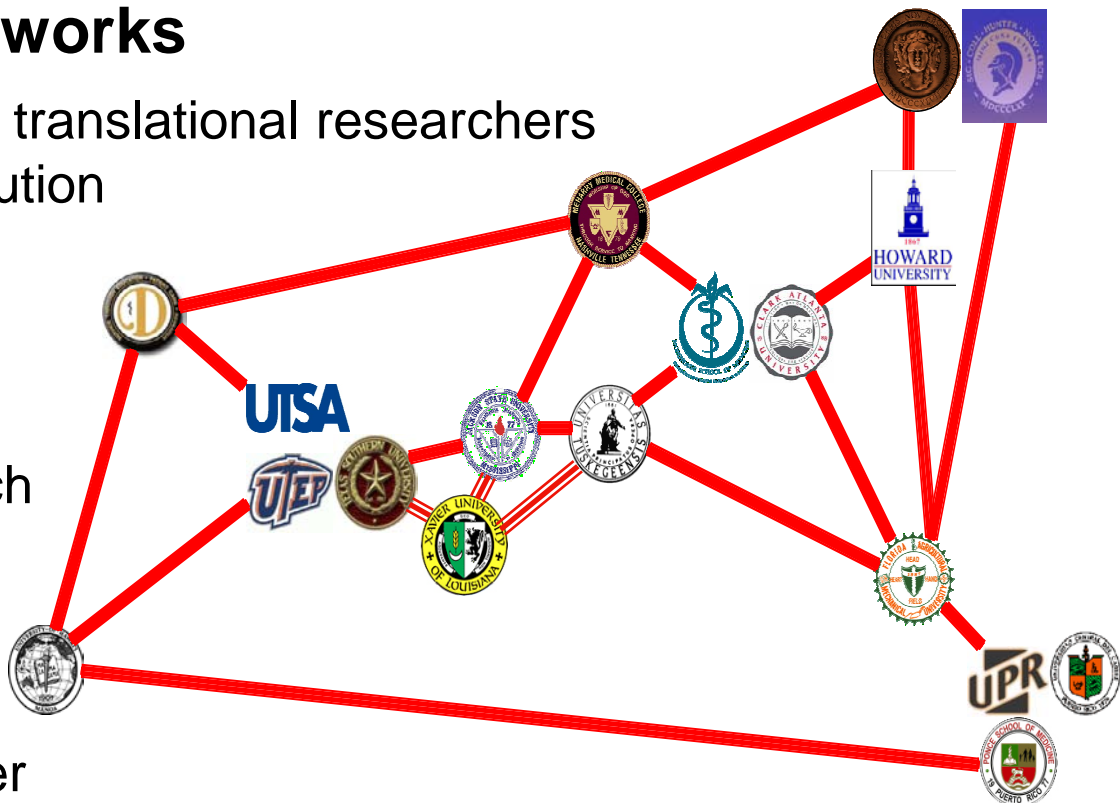
1. Create research networks
2. Coordinate and extend community engagement activities
3. Provide integrated training environments
4. Promote cutting-edge technologies

- ❖ Identify basic, clinical and translational researchers at each RCMI grantee institution

- ❖ Develop robust research-networking directory of investigators, showing their contact information, research interests, technologies, funding, and publications

❖ Group investigators into one or more research cluster

- ❖ Facilitate collaborations among cluster members by providing cyber workspaces and scheduling videoconferences/teleconferences and seminars, with periodic face-to-face encounters





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## Infrastructure Grants at RCMI G12-plus schools & at Jackson State University

These grants focus on five DHHS major health disparity areas: (1) cancer and immunological diseases; (2) cardiovascular and related diseases; (3) HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases; (4) neuropsychiatric disorders; and (5) obesity and metabolic syndromes.

Program	BRC	CRC	CCRE	CCHD	COBRE	BRIN/ INBRE	SNRP	CRSRP	CRECD	CVD	MBRS	MIDARP	EXPORT	AASK	Cancer Ctrs
Funding Agency	NCRR	NCRR	NCRR	NCRR/ NIAID	NCRR	NCRR	NINDS	NICHD/ NCRR	NCRR	NHLBI	NIGMS	NIDA	NCMHD	NIDDK	NCI
Charles Drew University	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University of Hawaii	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
University of Puerto Rico	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓
Meharry Medical College	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Morehouse School of Medicine	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Howard University	✓	GCRC											✓	✓	✓
Jackson State University	✓					✓		✓		✓ JHS*	✓		✓		

Recently, RCTR awards have been made to Charles Drew University, Morehouse School of Medicine and Meharry Medical College. Also, Morehouse School of Medicine, Jackson State University, University of Puerto Rico, and University of Hawaii are part of the U24 Networking Research Resources Across America grant.

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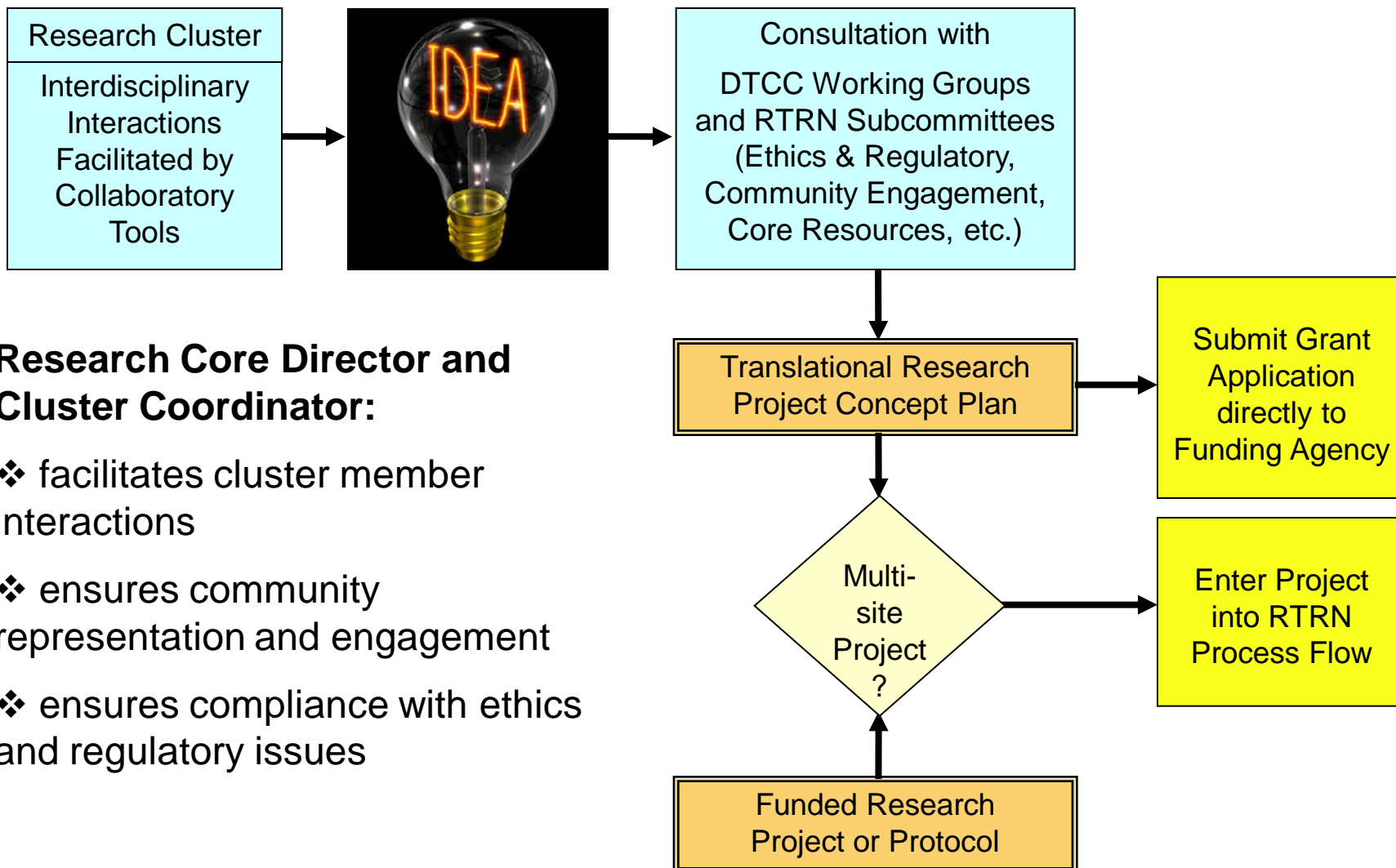


## **Responsibilities of Cluster Leaders**

- ❖ Populate clusters with junior and senior investigators
- ❖ Ensure balanced representation from G12-only and G12-plus RCMI grantee institutions
- ❖ Assist in the maintenance of a research-networking directory
- ❖ Facilitate collaborative linkages between cluster members
  - Convene regular cluster meetings via videoconferencing
  - Schedule regular Webinar seminars
- ❖ Orchestrate a Cluster Strategic Plan with timelines and goals
- ❖ Plan agenda for the Research Clusters Conference in March 2010 and future face-to-face meetings



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## Research Cluster Communication

Research clusters will overcome the separation of space and time by functioning primarily through cyber workstations within the RTRN portal using online collaboratory technology.

- ❖ videoconferencing (seminars, works in progress, meetings)
- ❖ project management tools (WebCT, Microsoft SharePoint)
- ❖ posting activities, project concepts, manuscripts, grant applications

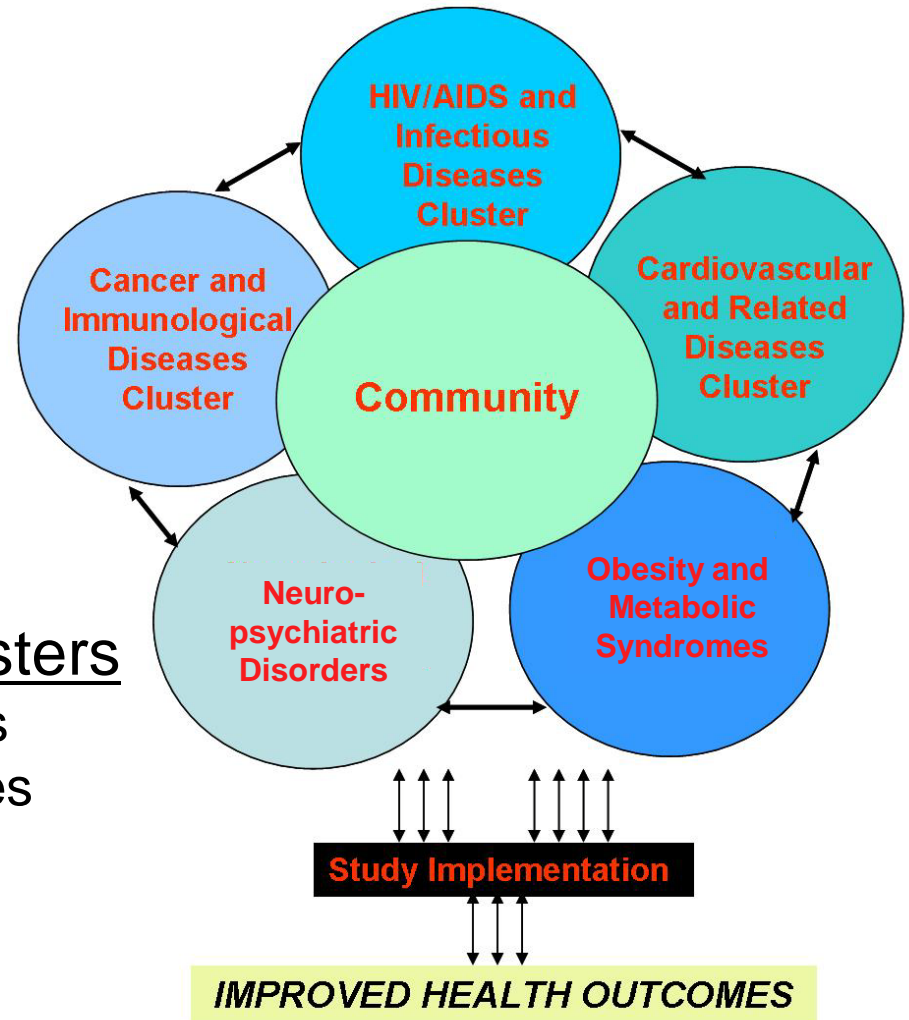
Clusters will meet regularly to discuss recent research findings, research methods, and prospective collaborative projects for reducing health disparities. Each cluster will be encouraged to develop one or more translational research projects per year.

## 2. Coordinate and extend community engagement activities in the disease-based research clusters.

At least one community researcher will be assigned to each research cluster.

### Disease-Based Research Clusters

Cancer and Immunological Diseases  
Cardiovascular and Related Diseases  
HIV/AIDS and Infectious Diseases  
Neuropsychiatric Disorders  
Obesity and Metabolic Syndromes





## **3. Provide integrated training environments**

The Education and Dissemination Subcommittee will work with the DTCC to develop education and training materials for dissemination through the RTRN portal, thereby allowing RTRN clinical personnel, such as nurses, data-entry technicians, research coordinators, principal investigators and administrators).

The portal will provide a listing of on-line courses available, including a tutorial on how to use the DTCC portal itself. Archived or live videos of trainings, seminars and lectures conducted across the different RCMI sites would also serve as training materials.



## **4. Promote cutting-edge technologies**

The Core Resources and Translational Informatics Subcommittees will work closely with the DTCC and Research Clusters to develop and promote cutting-edge technologies. By attending regularly scheduled Research Cluster meetings, subcommittee members will be actively engaged in designing innovative tools and developing new applications for existing tools, in response to the individual needs of the Research Clusters. In so doing, collaborations will be significantly enhanced.



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## RTRN Small Grants Program

Objective: To promote inter-institutional collaborations by providing **modest funding for short-term research projects**, including pilot and feasibility studies; secondary analysis of existing data; small, self-contained research projects; development of research methodology; and development of new research technology. In particular, the Small Grants Program encourages **cross-disciplinary translational research projects across two or more RCMI institutions that utilize the infrastructure of the Data and Technology Coordinating Center (DTCC).**

FOA issue date: April 1, 2010

Application deadline: June 15, 2010

Review: RTRN EAC, RCMI EAC and RCMI PI/PDs

## RTRN SGP Proposals by School & Number of Applicants (June 2009 cycle)

RCMI Grantee Institution	Proposals Submitted	Applicants (PIs)
Florida A&M University	5	4
Howard University College of Medicine	3	3
Ponce School of Medicine	2	2
Texas Southern University	2	2
Universidad Central del Caribe	2	2
University of Texas at El Paso	1	1
Charles Drew University	5	5
Meharry Medical College	5	1
Morehouse School of Medicine	1	1
University of Hawaii at Manoa	6	6
University of Puerto Rico	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>





## Research Centers in Minority Institutions Translational Research Network

RCMI Grantee Institution	Applications		Awards	
	PI	Co-PI	PI	Co-PI
City College of New York		1		1
Florida A&M University	5			
Howard University College of Medicine	3	2	2	1
Jackson State University		1		1
Morgan State University		1		1
Ponce School of Medicine	2		2	
Texas Southern University	2			
Universidad Central del Caribe	2	2	1	
University of Texas at El Paso	1	1	1	
University of Texas at San Antonio		1		1
Charles Drew University	5	4	3	1
Meharry Medical College	5	6		1
Morehouse School of Medicine	1	2		1
University of Hawaii at Manoa	6	5	1	3
University of Puerto Rico	2	2	1	

## RTRN SGP Awardees (PI from G12-only Schools)

<b>Antonio Martins, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – Universidad Central del Caribe Collaborator – Morehouse School of Medicine	<b>Neuroprotection of Progenitors and Mature Neurons in Experimental Stroke</b> <b>Neuro</b>
<b>Julie Dutil, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – Ponce School of Medicine Collaborator – Jackson State University	<b>Genetic Susceptibility to Hypertension: From Rats to Human</b> <b>Cardio</b>
<b>Qiyi Tang, M.D., Ph.D.</b> Applicant – Ponce School of Medicine Collaborator – University of Texas at San Antonio	<b>Epigenetic Studies of Kaposi's Sarcoma-associated Herpesvirus (KSHV)</b> <b>Inf Dis</b>
<b>Kristin Gosselink, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – University of Texas at El Paso Collaborator – Morgan State University	<b>A Role for Stress-Induced Modifications to the GnRH System in Prostate Cancer</b> <b>Cancer</b>
<b>Richard Enrique Blake, M.D.</b> Applicant – Howard University Collaborator – Meharry Medical College	<b>Ultrastructural, Immunohistochemical and Biochemical Analysis of Small Leiomyomas</b> <b>Cancer</b>
<b>Lisa Fitzpatrick, M.D.</b> Applicant – Howard University Collaborator – Charles Drew University	<b>Pilot Study to Assess the Impact of Yoga and Meditation in HIV+ Clients in Care</b> <b>Community</b>



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## RTRN SGP Awardees (PI from G12-plus Schools)

<b>Aaron Ohta, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – University of Hawaii at Manoa Collaborator – City College of New York	<b>A Smart Culture Dish Platform</b>  <b>Inf Dis</b>
<b>Valerie Wonja, M.D.</b> Applicant – University of Puerto Rico Collaborator – University of Hawaii at Manoa	<b>CSF Monocyte HIV-1 Proviral DNA and Oxidative Stress in Women with HAND</b> <b>Inf Dis</b>
<b>Sheba Mariam George, Ph.D</b> Applicant – Charles Drew University Collaborator – University of Hawaii at Manoa	<b>Health Research Literacy Advancement among Multicultural Populations</b> <b>Community</b>
<b>Jorge Nestor Artaza, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – Charles Drew University Collaborator – Morehouse School of Medicine Collaborator – University of Hawaii at Manoa	<b>Vitamin D Ameliorates the Development of Fibrosis Associated with Cardiovascular Disease</b>  <b>Cardio</b>
<b>Suzanne Porszasz-Reisz, Ph.D.</b> Applicant – Charles Drew University Collaborator – Howard University	<b>Histological and Genetic Analysis of Muscle in COPD Patients</b>



## **Other Collaborative Activities**

- ❖ Teleconference with Brian Reynolds, PhD, of the Duke Translational Research Institute, to discuss strategies to increase participation and interactions within the Radiological Cluster
- ❖ Coordination between RCTRs and CTSA-affiliated schools in key function areas to reduce duplication, increase efficiency and promote inter-institutional collaboration
- ❖ Streamline IRB approval across RCMI grantee institutions
- ❖ Leverage participation in the U24 grant, entitled “Networking Research Resources Across America”



## **Translational Research Cluster System DTCC Plan to Support Collaborations**

- ❖ Revitalize the web presence for cluster scientists' interactions
- ❖ Create listservs for each cluster
- ❖ Schedule regular teleconferences for research clusters and project-specific calls
- ❖ Distribute funding opportunity announcements
- ❖ Send newsletters to each research cluster
- ❖ Establish tools, such as research blog and frequently asked questions
- ❖ Create “skill finder” tool (per Harvard Catalyst model), post “want ads” for collaborators
- ❖ Host monthly “lunch-and-learn” session, Webinar/videoconferences to showcase particular schools or projects and discuss collaborations



## **Conflict Resolution: Governance Manual**

Any conflicts arising between network investigators in the conduct of collaborative activities shall be addressed in consultation with the PIs, NIH and External Advisory Committee, as appropriate.

Conflicts of authorship shall be resolved according to standards set forth by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors in the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals.



## Evaluation

- 1) What is the impact of the collaboratory infrastructure on the scientific process as measured by scientific productivity (e.g., number and quality of publications), collaboration experience (e.g., quantity, quality and diversity of collaborations), training and faculty development support (e.g., increased access to mentors and seminars or accelerated academic advancement), workflow efficiency, and changes in social organization?
- 2) What are the influential determinants (barriers and facilitators) of successful collaboratory development, implementation, and scientific productivity?
- 3) What are the perceived benefits and limitations of collaboratory involvement at level of the individual, the group (collaborating units), the organization (the collaboratory or center), or the affiliated institution(s)?