

Getting a Postdoctoral Fellowship NIH F32 and Beyond

Ruchika

Postdoctoral fellow, Kroetz laboratory

University of California San Francisco

Who am I?

- Originally from India, BSc Biochemistry, MSc Biochemistry
- PhD from Purdue University
- Started Postdoc at UCSF at 2014
- Membrane Protein Biology

Fellowships/grants I've applied for

- American Heart Fellow ships www.heart.org
- Projects broadly related to cardiovascular diseases
- Mission: To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Founded in 1924, for nearly 100 years, we've been fighting heart disease and stroke, striving to save and improve lives.

Fellowships/grants I have been awarded

- American Heart Fellowship
- Year 2 \$56140 + \$58228
- \$3000 for other expenses: travel, equipment

Timeline

- Started 1 month before the deadline
- Revision in 6 months - Keep producing data
- 1 month before the deadline - start writing
- Revisions with PI – back and forth
- Got the fellowship in 4 months

One practical tip

- Remember Big picture – keep repeating significance, innovation and impact
- Alternatives and Pitfalls

Getting a Postdoctoral Fellowship NIH F32 and Beyond

Milena Gianfrancesco, MPH, PhD

April 10, 2019

Who am I?

- From Providence, RI
- PhD in Epidemiology (2016) from UC Berkeley School of Public Health
- Started at UCSF in August 2016 as a postdoc in Division of Rheumatology, School of Medicine
- Research: adverse events associated with immunosuppressant medications, genetic epidemiology, electronic health records, machine learning, big data

Fellowships/grants I've applied for & have been awarded

- Applied and received an NIH **F31** predoctoral fellowship during my last 1.5 years as a PhD student
- Applied for an NIH **F32** in December 2015 while still a grad student; was just over payline
- Re-applied in August 2016 while beginning postdoc; received grant in April 2017
 - Agreement with PI that she would cover my salary during the review process; was confident application would be funded given previous score
- Also applied for a 1-year **private foundation award** (Rheumatology Research Foundation), which covered conferences, equipment, and small stipend (Jan-Dec 2017)
- Applied and received **NIH Loan Repayment Award**
- Recently applied for an NIH **K01** career development award

Timeline

- “Start” 6 months before: think about aims, really rough hypotheses, identify mentors and collaborators
 - What do you want your “training” to look like / include?
- But really start 3 months before:
 - Create an outline of all documents needed, and notify your pre-award contact that you will be applying.
 - Work on the boring boiler plate docs when your brain isn't working; don't leave until the end, there are many moving parts!
 - Likely will be working on research strategy, aims, and training plan up until the end

Two practical tips

- Seek additional funding through private foundations (e.g. "summer internships" or one year awards) to help boost salary
- Read as many examples of grants as you can-- it really helps!

Getting a Postdoctoral Fellowship NIH F32 and Beyond

Teresa Monkkonen, PhD

Teresa.Monkkonen@ucsf.edu

4/10/2019

About Me: Relevant Academic Background

- B.S. Biochemistry and Cell Biology
Rice University, Houston, TX
- PhD in Molecular and Cellular Biology
Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX
- UCSF Start, Department of Pathology: 8/2016
- Field of Study: Tumor Microenvironment
 - Big change from my PhD work

Teresa's Grant Application Process

- American Cancer Society
 - Private Grant
 - Similar format to NIH F32
 - Two deadlines/ year for submission
 - 2-3 years of funding, depending on time elapsed since PhD granted

- A.P. Giannini
 - Private grant for California postdocs
 - Biomedical research
 - One fall deadline/ year

- NIH F32
 - Others will discuss this more
 - I submitted to NCI; NCI is one of the more competitive agencies

- I also submitted and was supported by an internal UCSF grant for 3 years (IRACDA- Individual Research and Academic Career Development Award)

- Motivation: Previous external funding enhances competitiveness in the academic job market

Grant	Approximate Deadline
NIH F32 (NCI)	August 2017
American Cancer Society	October 2017
A.P. Giannini	Nov 2017
ACS reapplication	October 2018

Awarded Grants



- American Cancer Society + Jean Perkins Foundation
- I submitted to Cellular Biology and Metastasis section (or similar...)
- 2 reviewers give you marks 1-5 (1= outstanding etc.) on candidate, training plan, and mentor/PI
- 3 years of funding- stipend + \$4000 for supplies and domestic travel; total = \$163, 500
- Does not completely cover my salary + benefits; my PI covers ~\$5,000/year

Timeline





- Preparation: took 1 month of no bench work for 1st grant submitted
- For subsequent grants: substantial reformatting; different non research proposal documents; probably 2-3 weeks per submission depending on how much work necessary
- Funding timeline:
 - Application submitted: 10/2017
 - Application reviewed and notified of wait list status: Spring 2018
 - Notified that application funded: 11/2018
 - Funding started: 1/2019

Practical tips

- Plan ahead
- Read applications of others in your lab to get information re: facilities, equipment, etc.- also UCSF has prepared statements online, for example re: responsible conduct of research
- Make the grant EASY to understand
- On thing that improved my application:

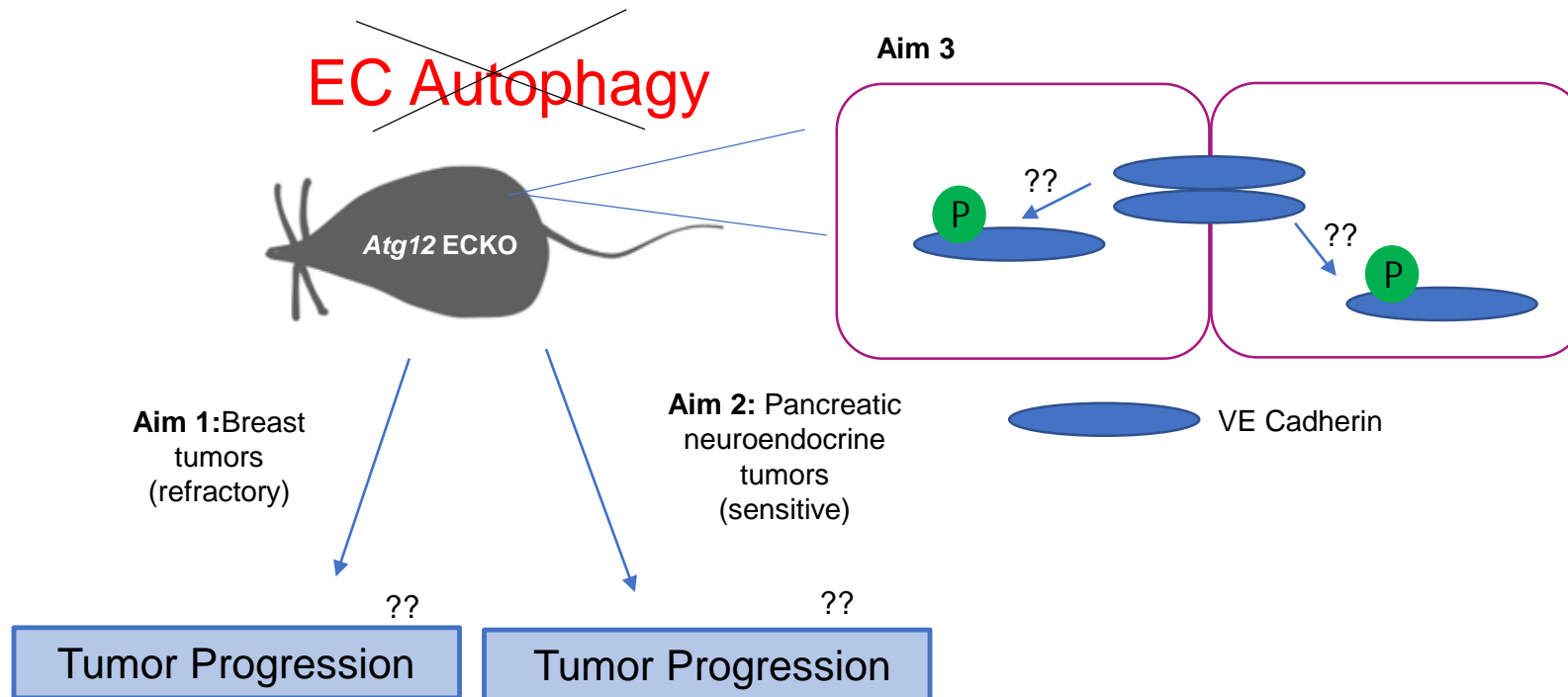
Grant	Approximate Deadline
NIH F32 (NCI)	August 2017
American Cancer Society	October 2017
A.P. Giannini	Nov 2017
ACS reapplication	October 2018

 Not read by other PI
Outcome: not reviewed

 Feedback from outside PI
Outcome: funded

Practical tips

- Graphical abstract
 - Goal: simple cartoon model, like for a qualifying exam
 - Forces you to FOCUS your grant



Getting a Postdoctoral Fellowship NIH F32 and Beyond

Hanna Sabelström

April 10, 2019

Who am I?

- From Stockholm, Sweden
- PhD from Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden
- I joined UCSF in October 2014
- Neuroscientist
- I transitioned from Spinal Cord Injury Research (big lab, famous PI) during my PhD training to Brain Tumor Research (first postdoc in young PI's lab) for my postdoctoral training.

Fellowships/grants I've applied for

I applied for 4 postdoc fellowships in the early fall before joining UCSF

- **Swedish Research Council** (3 years salary + benefits + other expenses. \$350k)
 - Must have done PhD in Sweden.
- **European Molecular Biology Organization** (2 year salary + network. \$100k)
 - Must have done PhD in European country.
- **Damon Runyon** (3 years. \$150k. Extra \$2k/year for travel)
 - Possibility for extend for 4th year and possible award after year 3 and 4.
- **Human Frontiers** (3 years. \$150k. \$5k/year for travel. \$3k for moving)
 - 3rd year can be postponed and used as "start up"

I applied for 1 postdoc fellowship and 2 scholarships during my postdoc

- **American Brain Tumor Association** (2 years salary + benefits + other expenses. \$100k)
- **The Foundation BLANCEFLOR Boncompagni Ludovisi, née Bildt** (living cost, \$16k)
 - Must be Swedish or Italian to apply.

Fellowships/grants I have been awarded



- 3 year salary and benefits
- \$350k total. \$15k per year for “research related expenses”.
- Employed by a Swedish University and paid in Sweden providing an easy way to go back home.
- Opted out after 2.5 years.
- 2015-2017



- (2 years salary. \$100k)
- Opted out in favor of other fellowship but stayed on as a “non-stipendiary fellow”.
- Annual all-expenses paid meetings in US and Europe with other fellows and Lab Management Course.
- 2015-2016



- 2 year fellowship
- \$100k for salary or cost according to budget.
- Requires 75% effort.
- Required attendance at ABTA Family Conference at the end of fellowship (cost covered in budget).
- 2017-2019



- Scholarship awarded 2 times; 2015 and 2016.
- Stipend for living cost.
- \$16k (\$32k total).

Timeline and Practical Tips!

- Start in time!
- Ask for Reference letters and Letters of Support well in advance in case you need to revise them.
- Start by writing the research proposal and work on your personal motivation, PhD work summary, proposal summary etc. while someone is reading the research proposal for comments/suggestions.
- Your PI might have an “old” R01/grant application for a similar project that could help you while writing.
- Ask someone who knows your research to do a final proof reading. Your PI/mentor is most likely not going to check grammar and spelling. Make sure all figures are labeled and referenced correctly and that your references are up to date.