UNIVERSITY TIMES
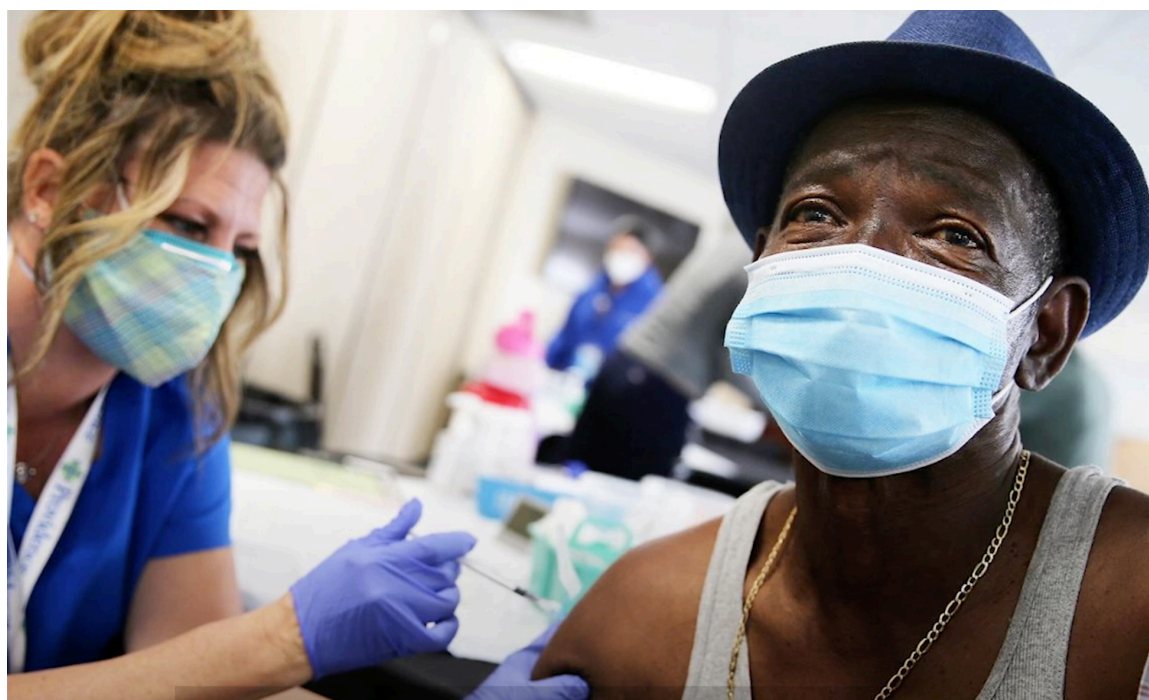## Serving Faculty & Staff Since 1968

Second year of Pitt Momentum Fund grants awarded

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Elizabeth Miller, a professor of Pediatrics at the School of Medicine, was awarded a Scaling Grant for "Promoting Trustworthiness of the SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Among Black and Latinx Communities." (From the Pitt Momentum Funds Virtual Celebration video)

Pitt's second annual Internal Funding Showcase — celebrating the Momentum Fund grant awardees — is online for now, but there's hope for an in-person event later in the year.

The Momentum Funds were created in 2019 to offer support across multiple stages of large, ambitious projects. The money comes from the office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research Rob Rutenbar and the Office of the Provost, by restructuring and extending a

group of existing research development funds — the Central Research Development Fund, Social Science Research Initiative, and Special Initiative to Promote Scholarly Activities in the Humanities — into a tiered set of awards.

An important focus of the Momentum Funds is to support partnerships, Rutenbar and Provost Ann Cudd said in a letter announcing the awards. "We want to set our faculty teams up for success, so the default setting for the funds is 'collaborate.' Because of that, we've selected ideas that span disciplines and the campus organizational chart."

"This year, we encouraged a range of interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches to address social injustice …," the letter said. "The responses and results have been amazing. We saw projects that responded to difficult, complex, systemic societal challenges by forming rich partnerships across campus and deepening their ties with dynamic nonprofit organizations."

The virtual celebration includes a video of the Momentum Fund winners that highlights the many varied projects.

Scaling Grant awardees

Scaling Grants — two-year term with an award cap of $400,000 — support the detailed project planning, gathering of proof-of-concept results, and reduction of technical risk so that teams can competitively pursue large, complex extramural funding.

- Elizabeth Miller, professor of Pediatrics at the School of Medicine: Promoting Trustworthiness of the SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine Among Black and Latinx Communities

- Esohe Osai, assistant professor of practice in Applied Developmental Psychology in the School of Education: Improving Educational Opportunities for Black Youth in Pittsburgh: A Justice-Centered Intervention

Teaming Grant awardees

Teaming Grants, for a one-year term with an award cap of $60,000, support the early-stage planning and capacity building of large multidisciplinary projects. Find videos about each project and links to abstracts here.

- Kevin Ashley, professor of Law: Center for Text Analytic Methods in Legal Studies

- Richard Boyce, assistant professor of Biomedical Informatics in the School of Medicine: Reducing Language Obstacles that Deaf Students Face When Developing Scientific Competencies

- Lori Delale-O'Connor, assistant professor of Education at the Center for Urban Education: Freedom Dreaming: Black Communal and Familial Educational Practices in Pittsburgh's Hill District Before, During and After COVID-19

- Emily Elliott, director and co-founder of the Pittsburgh Collaboratory for Water Research, Education, and Outreach: Transcending Disciplines to Advance Regional Water Equity

- Brandon Grainger, assistant professor and associate director of the Electric Power Engineering program in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering: Advanced Magnetics for Power and Energy Development — A Multidisciplinary Consortium between the Pitt, CMU, NCSU

- Jamie Hanson, assistant professor of Psychology: Understanding the Role of the Brain in Race/Ethnicity Based Stressors and Behavioral Challenges Among Youth of Color

- Hang Lin, assistant professor, Center for Cellular and Molecular Engineering, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, School of Medicine: Discovering Drugs to Treat Osteoarthritis with a Knee Joint-on-a-Chip Model

- Maya Ragavan, assistant professor of Pediatrics: Developing a Latinx Youth Research Advisory Board to Address and Dismantle Structural Inequities in Emerging Latinx Communities

Seeding Grant awardees

Seeding Grants, which provide up to $16,000 per year, support significant and innovative scholarship by individual or small groups of faculty at all ranks at the University. Attention is given to supporting early-career faculty and areas where opportunities for extramural funding are extremely limited. Proposals are reviewed in four tracks: Creative Arts, Performing Arts and Humanities; Engineering, Technology, Natural Sciences and Mathematical Sciences; Health and Life Sciences; and Social Sciences, which includes business, policy, law, education and social work.

- Josefina Bañales, assistant professor, Developmental Psychology, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Anti-Racism Action Development Among Latinx Youth

- Betty Braxter, associate professor and associate dean for Undergraduate Education

- School of Nursing: A Pilot Exploring Self-Advocacy as a Factor in Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in Pregnant Black Women

- Caitlin Bruce, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Hemispheric Conversations Urban Art Project

- Lei Fang, assistant professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering, Swanson School of Engineering: Toward Effects of Collective Animal on Larger-scale Ocean Transport and Mixing

- Morgan Frank, assistant professor, School of Computing and Information: Detailed Unemployment and the Resilience of Urban Workers

- John Gardner, assistant professor, Department of Geology and Environmental Science, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Coastal Rivers: The Missing Link in Source to Sink Understanding of Sediment Flux in a Changing World

- Sarah Hainer, assistant professor, Department of Biological Sciences Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Determining Gene Expression Control During Neural Differentiation Through Coupled Protein Localization and RNA-seq in Single Cells

- Paul Harper, clinical assistant professor of Business Administration, Katz School of Business: Conceptualizing Corporate Reparations

- Xiaowei Jia, assistant professor, Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Information: Physics-Guided Machine Learning for Scientific Knowledge Discovery

- In Hee Lee, assistant professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering Swanson School of Engineering: Seed Imbibition Monitoring Using Millimeter-Scale Wireless Sensing Systems

- Sera Linardi, associate professor of Economics, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs: Community-Centric Building of Digital Infrastructures Against Systemic Oppression: G2A Police Misconduct Complaint Support System

- Josue Lopez, assistant professor of decoloniality, School of Education: Pittsburgh is Our Home, Too: Refugee Arts and Education for Well-Being

- Mary Elizabeth Rauktis, research associate professor, School of Social Work: Supporting the Education of Youth in Foster Care During the Pandemic: Foster Parent and Agency Perspectives

- Todd Reeser, professor of French and chair of the Department of French & Italian, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Multimedia Archival Work in Paris: The Reception of LGBTQ French Cinema

- Laura Ritchey, assistant professor of Chemistry, Pitt-Johnstown: Exploring the Cause and Effect of Ribosomal RNA Hidden Breaks in Various Plants

- Rachel Robertson, assistant professor of special education, School of Education: Developing Communities of Research and Practice to Support Teacher Use of Proactive Behavior Management

- Mitzy Schaney, assistant professor and director of Environmental Studies, Pitt-Johnstown: Characterization of Microplastics in Sediments and Surface Waters of a Headwater Catchment

- Xulong Tang, assistant professor, Department of Computer Science, School of Computing and Information: Embracing Heterogeneity in Modern GPUs

- Daniel Villarreal, assistant professor of Linguistics, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences: Overlearning Speaker Race in Sociolinguistic Auto-Coding

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