

**Concept Clearance:****Reissuance of Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Program (Si2/R00), PAR-20-167; and****Reissuance of Limited Competition: Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Transition Award (R00), PAR-17-450**

The purpose of the NIH Lasker Clinical Research Scholars (Lasker Scholars) Program is to foster the development of select early stage clinical investigators into fully independent scientists. The NIH funds research and research training at extramural institutions, as well as within the NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP), to support the development of clinical treatments for disease and to improve human health. However, these efforts can be hindered by barriers to clinical and translational research. Such barriers include limited research time for clinical investigators, increases in the length of time to independent careers, and access to hospital facilities and patient enrollments.

In an effort to address these barriers, the NIH created the Lasker Clinical Research Scholars (Lasker Scholars) program in 2011. The program supports a small number of exceptional clinical researchers in the early stages of their independent careers to promote their development to established scientist. The program is described thoroughly in the following website: <https://www.nih.gov/research-training/lasker-clinical-research-scholars>.

The program represents an unprecedented intramural–extramural partnership involving the IRP, the Extramural Research Program, and the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation to fund top-notch clinical scientists. The program combines a period of research experience as a tenure-track Investigator in the IRP (5-7 years) with additional years of independent financial support, either at an extramural research institution or by continuation in the IRP. For applicants applying between 2011 through 2014, Scholars could obtain up to 5 years of R00 extramural funding by submitting a competitive application through a “Limited Competition” FOA (PAR-17-450), which now requires reissuance. For applicants submitting in 2015 through today, the R00 component was reduced to 3 years but can be awarded following administrative review by the sponsoring NIH Institute. The R00 component provides up to \$500,000 per year in direct costs.

Since the inception of the program in 2011-2012, there have been 33 current and past Scholars, including physicians, nurses and dentists, selected from 121 applicants. 11 NIH Institutes support one or more Scholars, the largest number being supported by NCI. During the IRP phase, Scholars are reviewed every 2 years by the Institute’s Board of Scientific Counselors, a FACA committee that evaluates research in that Institute’s IRP.

The program started slowly, with one Scholar selected from the 2011-12 candidates and one from the 2012-13 candidates, but since then has averaged more than 4 Scholars per cohort.

The success of the program can be best assessed by looking at the long-term outcomes of the Scholars. We are proud of the accomplishments of the Scholars so far. 4 Lasker Scholars have now been tenured in the IRP, the others are in good standing on the tenure-track. The tenured Scholars include:

- Dr. Nehal Mehta (NHLBI), tenured 2/2020, (the one Scholar from 2011-12),
- Dr. Jessica Gill (NINR), tenured 6/2018, (the one Scholar from 2012-13). Dr. Gill recently served as the acting Deputy Director of NINR, and is currently the acting intramural Scientific Director of NINR.
- Dr. Armin Raznahan (NIMH), from the 2014-15 cohort, granted early tenure 4/2020. He was offered a position as departmental chair at the University of Cambridge, but decided to remain at the NIH.
- Dr. Christian Hinrichs (NCI), from the 2014-15 cohort, granted early tenure 5/2020. Dr. Hinrichs will be leaving the NIH at the end of the year to become co-Director of the MacMillan Cancer Immunology and Metabolism Center of Excellence at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey; Chief of the Cancer Immunotherapy Section; and co-Program Leader of Cancer Metabolism and Growth. He will be the first Scholar to apply for the R00 extramural component of the program.

We are asking the Council of Councils for concept clearance to continue the Lasker Clinical Research Scholars program. This includes reissuing the Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Program (Si2/R00), the annual funding announcement for new applicants; and reissuing the Limited Competition: Lasker Clinical Research Scholars Transition Award (R00), through which Scholars who applied to the program before 2015 can now apply for their R00 funding component.