

8.0 Description of Institutional Environment

An exceptional environment exists at Wake Forest University Health Sciences (WFUHS) to facilitate Dr. Klepin's ongoing research in the field of geriatric oncology. Dr. Klepin's cross-disciplinary research focused on measuring and improving physical function in older adults receiving chemotherapy allows her to benefit from the extensive resources available through the Comprehensive Cancer Center, The J. Paul Sticht Center on Aging, and the Division of Public Health Sciences. She has also benefited greatly from ongoing collaborative relationships with faculty in the Health and Exercise Science department on the Reynolda campus of Wake Forest University (WFU). Dr. Klepin also has access to large research databases including the Health Aging and Body Composition (Health ABC) Study for other analyses. Dr. Klepin will continue to have access to cross-departmental mentorship, which is supported formally by the WFU Pepper Center Research Career Development Core (RCDC).

The **Comprehensive Cancer Center of Wake Forest University (CCCWFU)** is one of 38 NCI-designated cancer centers. Research programs include Cancer Control, Clinical Research, Cell Growth and Survival, and Cellular Damage and Defense. Dr. Klepin's research benefits from faculty expertise in outcomes-related and treatment-focused research within the Cancer Control and Clinical Research Programs. Dr. Klepin has access to shared resources of the CCCWFU, including the Biostatistics Core and Clinical Research Management Program to facilitate development, implementation and oversight of independent research projects including her current ASP-ASH career development award protocol. Dr. Klepin's academic office (280 sq. ft.) is located within the administrative facilities of the Comprehensive Cancer Center and she has excellent administrative and computer support within the Administrative Core of the CCCWFU. She has Pentium 4 Dell office computer with dual screen monitor and color laser printer available at all times as well as a laptop with remote desktop feature to provide full access all files and computer software from any wireless location.

Dr. W is Director at Large of the CCCWFU and has been instrumental in facilitating and promoting Dr. Klepin's investigator-initiated trials within the CCCWFU. As a member of the CCCWFU, Dr. Klepin receives personnel support for pilot studies including data management, regulatory assistance, data collection, and protocol development. The CCCWFU also provides a web-based data entry system to facilitate efficient data entry and analyses. Dr. Klepin has received ongoing statistical support from Dr. X, who has assisted in the statistical design, analysis and interpretation of data on all of Dr. Klepin's prior investigator-initiated studies. Dr. X will continue to provide ongoing support and mentoring with a specific focus on issues related to design and analysis of behavioral intervention trials. Dr. Klepin has also received ongoing mentoring from Dr. Y, a member of the Cancer Control Program. Her support has continued to facilitate career development and will be instrumental in disseminating Dr. Klepin's cross-disciplinary research in the Cancer Survivorship community.

The **J. Paul Sticht Center on Aging** (Stephen Kritchevsky, PhD, Director) is a comprehensive program of WFUHS and North Carolina Baptist Hospital that coordinates research, clinical and teaching programs in gerontology and geriatric medicine. The multi-disciplinary research network based in the Sticht Center has allowed Dr. Klepin to develop productive mentoring collaborations to further her research and career development goals including collaboration with researchers in the Division of Public Health Sciences and the Department of Health and Exercise Science. The Kulynych Dementia Research Center is housed in 1800 sq. ft. of dedicated space in the Sticht Center. The Sticht Center is housed in a 210,000 square-foot, 5-story building that contains 128 beds for psychiatry, geriatric medicine, and rehabilitation medicine, academic office space for geriatric medicine and rehabilitation medicine, education space, and a geriatric clinical research center (see Pepper Center below).

The NIA-funded **Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC)** is comprised of over 30 faculty members from seven departments at Wake Forest University and is led by Dr. Kritchevsky. The WFU OAIC is also the national coordinating center for the OAIC. The Pepper Center's mission is to develop, test, and disseminate effective therapies for the prevention and treatment of physical disability from chronic disease in late life. The Pepper Center was competitively renewed in 2008. Dr. Klepin successfully competed for a slot as a Research Career Development Core (RCDC) Fellow in November 2006, and has access to the resources of the WFU OAIC. The RCDC provides ongoing interdisciplinary interactions with scientists throughout WFUHS with a common interest in aging research. Dr. Klepin also benefits from structured career development activities, including a biweekly grant and manuscript writing group and mentoring from a formal

mentoring committee. Members of Dr. Klepin's current mentoring team have served on her RCDC mentoring committee, guiding her career development, for the past 4 years. As an RCDC fellow, she has access to resources including the Biostatistics Core, Pilot/Exploratory Studies Core, and Recruitment Core for conduct of clinical research. She has successfully used these resources to implement her ASP-ASH career development award project resulting in excellent recruitment and retention. The Pepper OAIC has 4,000 sq. ft. of dedicated space within the Sticht Center, with facilities for state-of-the-art gait analysis, exercise training, exercise stress testing, echocardiography, strength and functional status testing, as well as facilities for metabolic studies, and office space for research staff.

The **Division of Public Health Sciences** ranks second in NIH funding nationally for public health sciences research and serves as the national coordinating center for several large multi-site clinical trials. The overall goals of the division are to further research programs in biostatistics, epidemiology, nutrition, and health promotion/disease prevention. Dr. Klepin has received formal training in research methodologies, statistical methods, and measurement of health outcomes through the Health Sciences Research Masters program. She has developed collaborative relationships with multiple faculty members with a research interest in cancer and aging. Dr. Klepin benefits from faculty expertise in the design and implementation of observational and behavioral intervention studies in cancer patients. She also benefits from their expertise in analyses of large publicly available databases such as Surveillance Epidemiology End Results (SEER).

The Department of Health and Exercise Science (HES) is focused on advancing the understanding of health and the prevention/treatment of chronic disease and physical disability. The department has a rich history of securing external research funding with faculty who are regarded as experts in their respective fields. There is a strong collaborative association between HES and the Aging Center with many on-going and completed physical activity intervention studies focused specifically on older adult populations, such as the multi-center LIFE trial. Dr. Z (mentor) is an expert on disability and behavioral interventions. He has a long-standing interest and expertise in studying physical function in older adults and is an active member of the WFU Pepper Center and co-leader of the Clinical Research Core. His expertise on measurement of and prevention of disability will be invaluable to Dr. Klepin for her proposed career development and research plan. The proposed research plan will integrate well with ongoing collaborative research relationships between HES, the Pepper Center and the CCCWFU.