



# **Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)**

## **FY 24: Year End Report**



# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

## Research Enhancement Assistance Program





# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

**FY 22:** REAP received fourteen applications, and **five** intramural research projects were funded by the Office of Research.

- Bridge Grants (2), Early Investigator Grants (2), Team Science Grant (1)
- **Total amount awarded in FY 22: \$309,971**

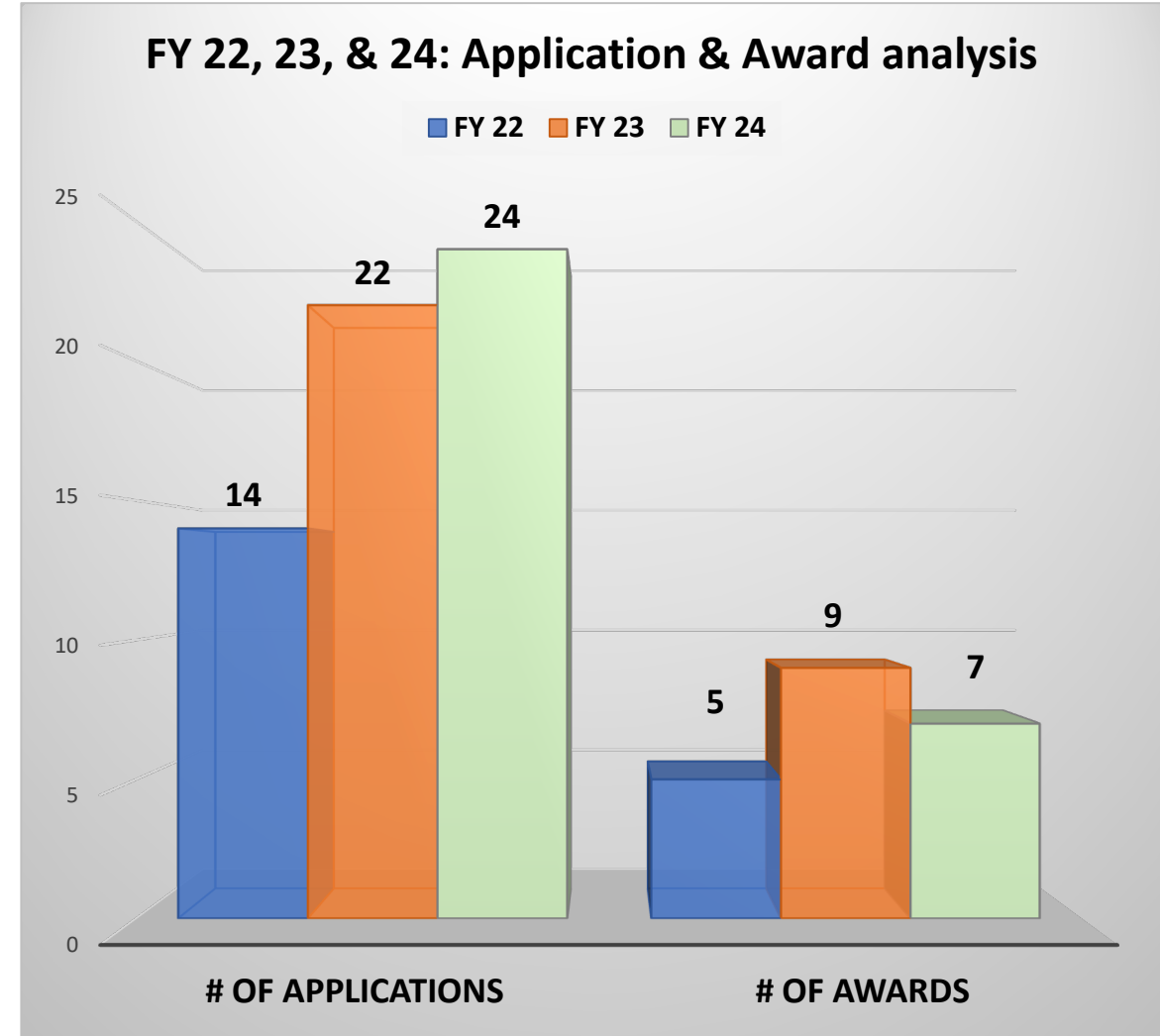
**FY 23:** REAP received twenty-two applications, and **nine** intramural research projects were funded by the Office of Research. This is a **57% increase** compared to FY 22.

- Early Investigator Grants (3), New Investigator Grants (3), Team Science Grants (3)
- **Total amount awarded in FY 23: \$784,408.20**

**FY 24:** REAP received twenty-four applications, and **seven** intramural research projects were funded by the Division of Research

- New Investigator Grants (4), and Bridge Grants (3)
- **Total amount awarded in FY 24 through August 31, 2024: \$507,066.00**

**Total Awards distributed through the REAP program: \$1,601,445.20**



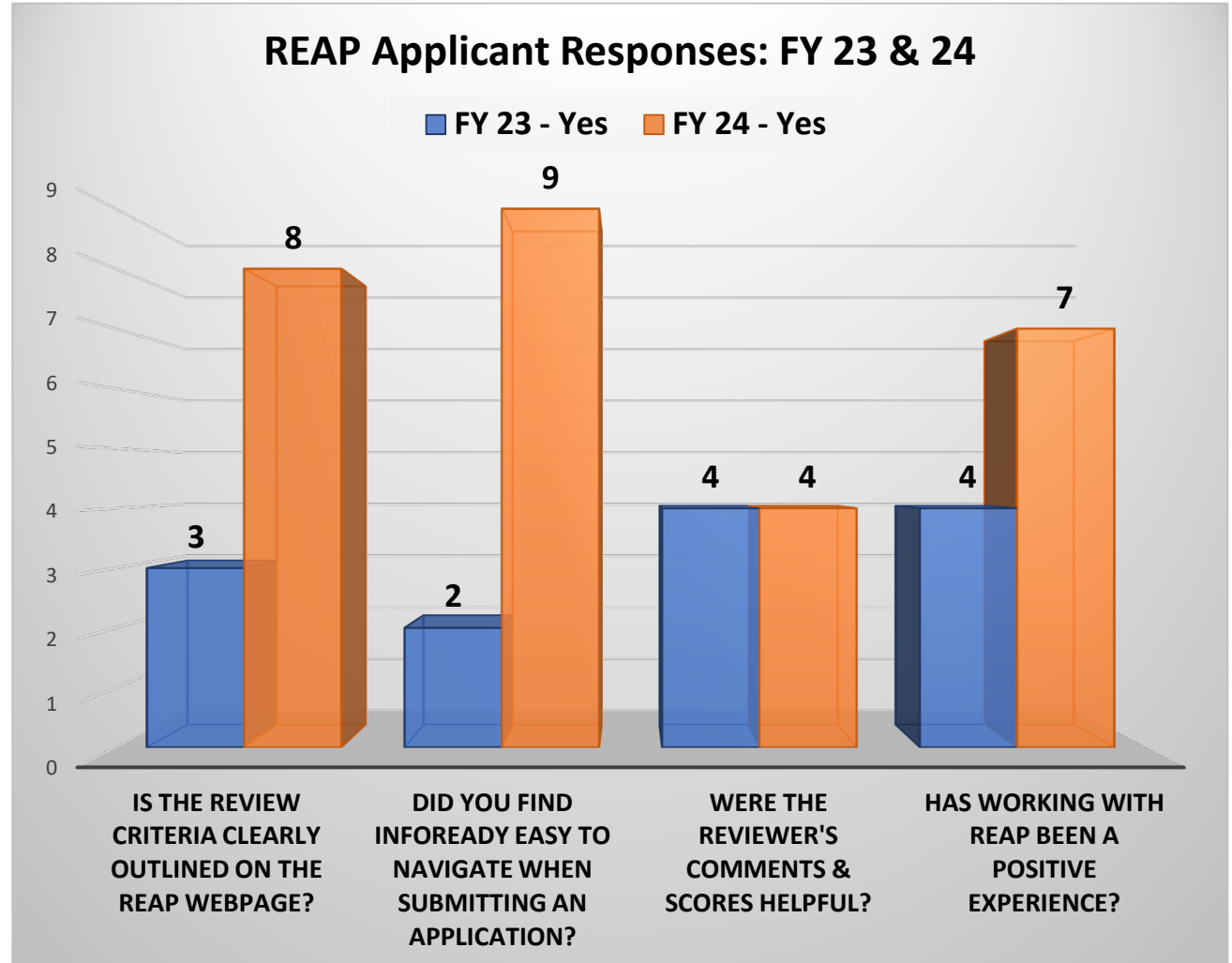


# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

**FY 24 Applicant data:** REAP surveyed 23 applicants about their experience working with REAP, working with InfoReady application software, and receiving reviewer's comments. **(39% participation rate: 7 New Investigator and 2 Bridge)**

- **Historic data (FY 23)**
  - REAP surveyed 15 applicants about their experience working with REAP, working with InfoReady application software, and receiving reviewer's comments.
  - **(40% participation rate: 5 ESI and 1 Team Science)**

Applicants acknowledged a positive experience working with REAP, the instructions on the REAP web page were clear, and found InfoReady easier to navigate compared to FY 23.



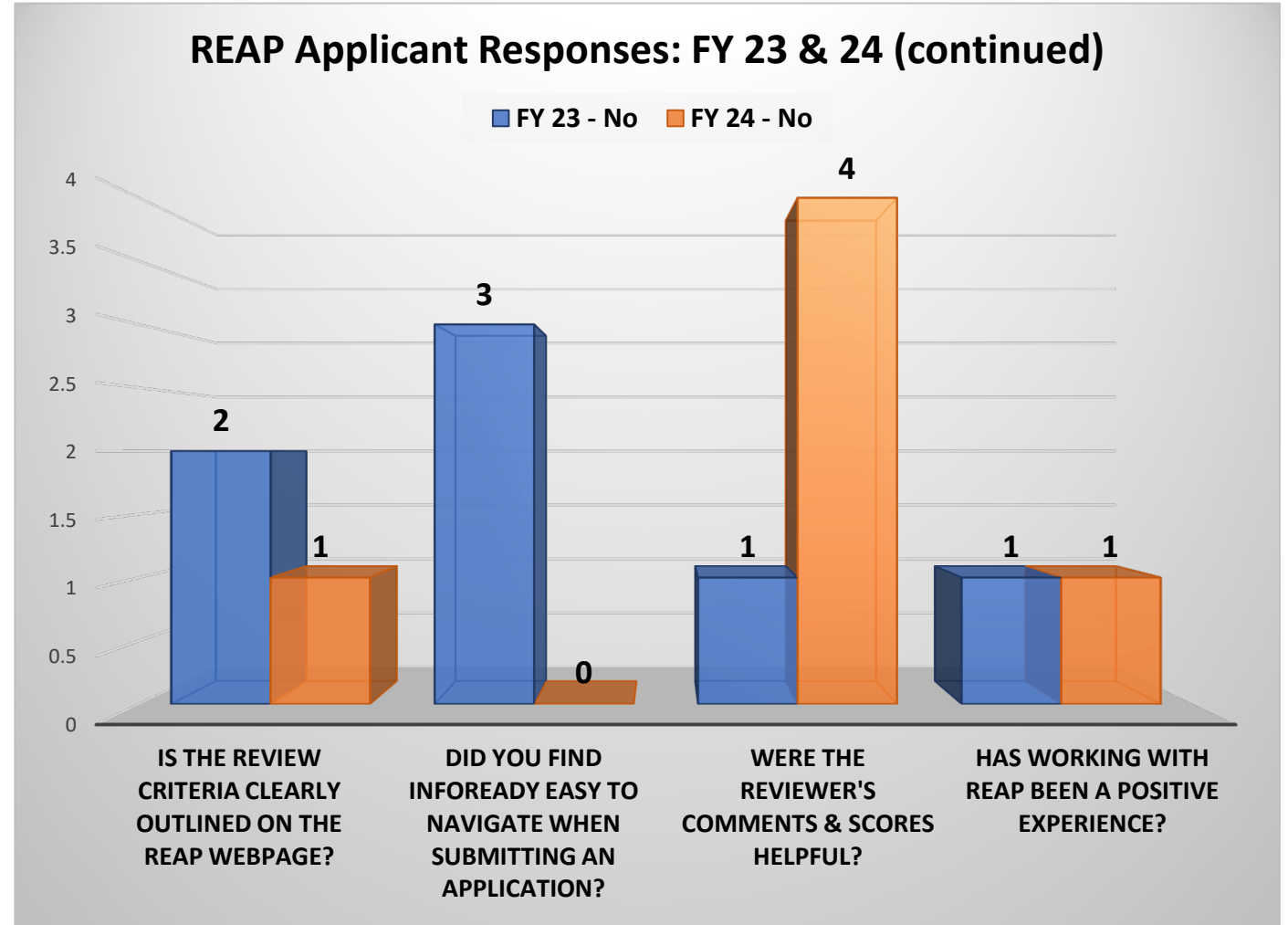


# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

## Opportunities for improvement:

Four applicants said they did not find reviewer's comments and scores helpful, but two applicants stated they are waiting on their scores/comments.

- Webinars prior to each REAP competition to answer their questions about the upcoming competition.
- Study section dates added to the REAP webpage, similar to NIH.
- Specific funding timelines with cutoffs listed on the REAP webpage.





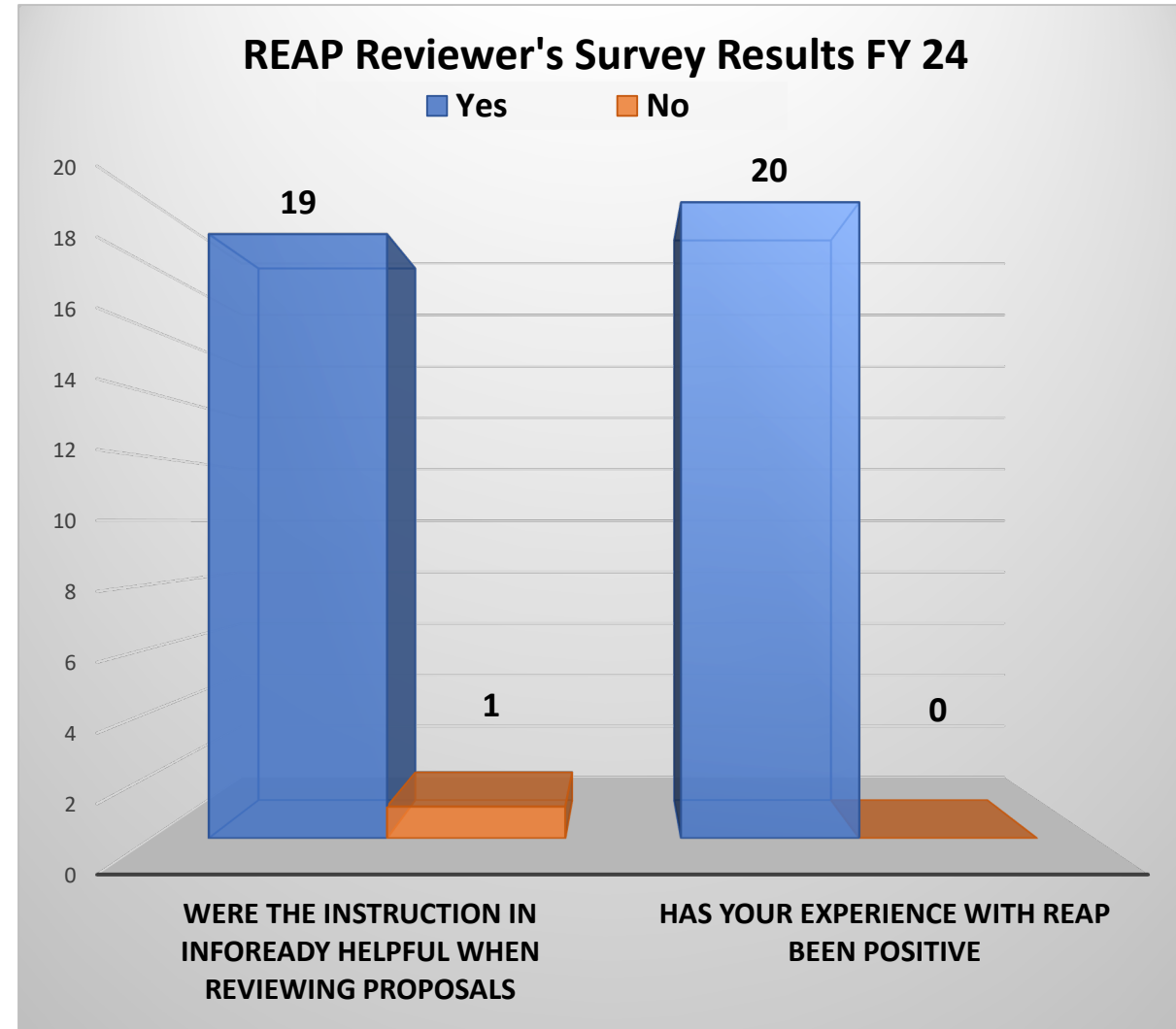
# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

Survey was distributed to 48 reviewers (internal and external); 20 reviewers participated (**42% participation rate**)

Reviewers acknowledged InfoReady was easy to use, the REAP web page clearly outlines the review criteria, and reviewers had a positive experience with REAP.

## Additional Comments from survey participants:

- *Great job!*
- *I've really enjoyed being a reviewer with this program. Looking forward to more years ahead!*
- *Please use administrative review to remove applications that are incomplete. For example, if SMART goals are not included (and that's the criteria for low score), then the reviewers have wasted preparation, review, and discussion time.*
- *Keep up the great work! You all did a fantastic job. Thank you so much for the opportunity and for allowing me to be part of the team. I truly appreciate it.*
- *The addition of the administrative review has helped significantly.*
- *From perspective of the chair, the process was quite pleasant. Much more smooth than the NIH study section!*
- *Need to consider how to better help applicants improve their applications... e.g. have applicants meet with small group of reviewers to discuss issues with project, give recommendations, etc...*
- *Explain the grant prior to being assigned a reviewer.*





# Research Enhancement Assistance Program (REAP)

## ***FY 23 & 24 REAP Recipients – Where are they now***

- Sixteen REAP recipients were surveyed, eleven recipients responded (69% participation: 1 Bridge, 5 Early-Stage Investigator, 2 New Investigator and 3 Team Science)
- Six investigators have submitted applications to the NIH, NSF or other federal agencies since receiving their REAP award, and some provided feedback:
  - *Scored, but not funded,*
  - *AHA Early Career Development - non scored. NIH K01 resubmission - under review,*
  - *NIH study section has not met.*
  - ***Dr. Griner awarded R03 grant August 2024, Return on Investment of \$138,000.***
- Five investigators plan to submit applications to federal agencies at the conclusion of their REAP grant.
- REAP recipients would like more Grant Writing Workshops, Assistance with Aims page, Resubmission Workshops and Mock Study Sections.

# REAP Grant Recipient Testimonials

**FY 23  
Early-Stage  
Investigator  
Recipient**

*“This ESI award has profound significance in my academic journey. It provided me with the opportunity to explore a relatively new area of host-microbial interactions and marked the beginning of my independent research in the multidisciplinary field that links the microbiome with host immune responses. With the funding, I was able to gather preliminary data crucial for a forthcoming NIH R03 or a R21 grant application of October 2024. Currently, I am analyzing the data for publication and preparing for the NIH grant submission.”*

**FY 23  
Team Science  
Recipient**

*“REAP has been very supportive throughout the first year of our Team Science Award. The research data that we are collecting will be sufficient for us to consider at least a couple of publications before the end of the Team Science Award. With the generated preliminary data from the funds that we received, we are ready to start the submission process for a few different grant mechanisms, including the DoD Visual Research Program as well as the NIH NEI R01 this coming Fall and next Spring respectively.”*

**FY 23  
Team Science  
Recipient**

*“We are starting our second year of funding for a team science award, which has allowed us to spearhead a new research avenue to devise novel small molecule therapeutics for cocaine use disorders (CUD). The funding has allowed us to refine this idea and form a dedicated group of investigators with diverse expertise to pursue this research. We are in the process in preparing a new grant submission which will use preliminary data from this first-year of funding, which should quell concerns raised in the previous application. Overall, REAP has been a great support and we believe it has set us up in a path of success.”*





# REAP Grant Recipient Testimonials

**FY 23  
Team Science  
Recipient**

*“The Team Science award “The impact of gestational environmental contaminant exposure on maternal and fetal pathophysiology” has now entered its second year. The investigators are examining the impact of ingesting environmental contaminants, such as methylmercury, on maternal and fetal health outcomes. The goal of our research is to investigate the mechanisms and toxicological impacts of dietary environmental contaminant exposure in a rodent model to determine the role of maternal exposure/transfer on neurodevelopment, along with the metabolic and microbiome systems. We plan to submit our first publication (of many) on these findings in Fall 2024, along with data from our companion zebrafish study. Without this support, we would not have been able to successfully compete in our last NIH P42 rounds for NIH program officer approval of P42 grant submission.”*

**FY 24  
New Investigator  
Grant  
Recipient**

*“The New Investigator seed grant from REAP has provided the resources to pilot studies investigating the efficacy of the sodium-glucose cotransport inhibitor empagliflozin in a rat model of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. With this seed grant I have been able to generate proof of concept data that will be used to apply for extramural funding (i.e. NIH R21). The data generated with the REAP grant will generate 1-3 peer reviewed publications.*

**FY 24  
New Investigator  
Grant  
Recipient**

*“My experience with REAP has been very positive. REAP has provided valuable support through quarterly meetings that fostered research accountability, budget management, and counsel. The financial support has allowed my lab to make significant progress in comparing miRNAs in optic nerve head cells between individuals of African and European descent. We also submitted an R01 grant with our initial research findings in February 2024. Although the grant was not discussed, we have received a summary statement, which we plan to address the reviewers’ comments in a resubmission grant in November 2024. We anticipate disseminating these research findings as a paper or poster presentation at ARVO in 2025. Additionally, we anticipate submitting 1 - 2 manuscripts describing these results for publication in peer-reviewed journals in Spring 2025.*

# FY 22 – 24 REAP Grant Recipients

## FY 22

- **Early-Stage Investigator Grant**
  - Dr. Stacey Griner
  - Dr. Sterling Ortega
- **Bridge Grant**
  - Dr. Rong Ma
  - Dr. Dong-Ming Su
- **Team Science Grant**
  - Dr. Jonathan Tune

## FY 23

- **Early-Stage Investigator**
  - Dr. Jayoung Kim
  - Dr. Rachel Menegaz
  - Dr. Yan Zhang
- **New Investigator Grant**
  - Dr. George Farmer
  - Dr. Tara Tovar-Vidales
  - Dr. Eul Hyun Suh
- **Team Science Grant**
  - Dr. Rebecca Cunningham
  - Dr. Dimitrios Karamichos
  - Dr. Luis Colon-Perez

## FY 24

- **New Investigator Grant**
  - Dr. Uyen-Sa Nguyen
  - Dr. Ritu Shetty
  - Dr. Malinee Neelamegam
  - Dr. Gregory Dick
- **Bridge Grant**
  - Dr. Liang-Jun Yan
  - Dr. Ann Schreihofner



# Research Enhancement Assistance Program: Opportunities for Growth in FY 25

- In collaboration with Dr. Tom Cunningham and Dr. Paula Gregory, develop quarterly or semi-annual in-person workshops for faculty.
  - Workshop suggestions: Mock Study Section, Aims Page, and Resubmission
  - Invite UNT Denton, Dallas and Frisco campuses to participate.
  - Return on Investment: Increase in extramural funding.
- Collaborate with the Director of Educational Programs to develop tutorial and instruction guides for REAP applicants, reviewers and answer frequently asked questions.
  - Create InfoReady tutorials with visual step-by-step instructions for applicants and reviewers.
  - Work with Dr. Tom Cunningham and Ms. Knutson to develop a repository for REAP FAQs and tutorials.
- Develop Early Stage/New Investigator mentoring program for previously triaged REAP applications.
  - Identify a cohort of senior research investigators, with a successful grant approval record, to mentor and review Aims page and Grants.
  - Early Stage/New Investigator participants would be eligible to apply for the REAP Bridge grant after successful completion of this mentoring program.
- REAP information: Study Sections, Tracking and Webinars:
  - Track REAP recipient submissions and award history for up to ten years, after completion of their grant.
  - Host webinar 30 days prior to the upcoming REAP competition to answer questions from applicants.
  - Consider adding Study Section information to the REAP webpage to provide applicants with an estimated time frame of the grant review and when they should expect funding determinations to be announced.





## REAP: FY 24 Reviewer Roster

**Suchismita Acharya, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Pharmacology & Neuroscience  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Michael Allen, PhD**

Professor  
Microbiology, Immunology, and Genetics  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Robert Barber, PhD**

Professor  
Family Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative  
Medicine  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Van Barnes, PhD**

Instructor  
John W. Deming Department of Medicine  
Section of Hematology & Medical Oncology  
Tulane University

**Riyaz Basha, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Vice Chair, Research  
Pediatrics and Women's Health  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Jorge Belgodere, PhD**

Research Faculty  
John W. Deming Department of Medicine  
Section of Hematology & Medical Oncology  
Tulane University

**Shawn Bender, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Biomedical Sciences  
University of Missouri

**Bruce Bunnell, PhD**

Professor, Chair  
Microbiology, Immunology, and Genetics  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Michelle Callegan, PhD**

Director of Vision Research  
Department of Ophthalmology  
Dean A. McGee Professor  
George Lynn Cross Research Professor  
Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor  
Professor, Dept of Microbiology & Immunology  
Oklahoma University Health Science Center

**Cory Coehoorn, PhD**

Director, Ph.D. Rehabilitation Science  
Associate Professor  
Rehabilitation Science and Family Medicine  
Louisiana State University Health Shreveport

**Karrie Curry, MS, Ph D, CHES**

Assistant Professor  
Dept of Personalized Health and Well-Being  
School of Health Professions  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Deidre J. Devier, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor - Clinical  
Dept of Cell Biology, Anatomy & Neurology  
LSU School of Medicine

**Gregory Dick, PhD**

Associate Professor Physiology & Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Dr. Robyn L. Dodge, RPA**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology  
Director, Hun Tun Archaeology Project  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
The University of Texas at Arlington

**Martha Felini, PhD, DC, MPH**

Associate Professor - Epidemiology  
Department of Pediatrics & Women's Health  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Michael Forster, PhD**

Regents Professor  
Pharmacology & Neuroscience  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Clifton F. Frilot II, PhD, MBA, PE**

Associate Dean of Business, Technology and Research  
Professor, Rehabilitation Sciences  
School of Allied Health Professions  
LSU Health Science Center

**Jason Gardner, Ph.D.**

LSU Health Science Center  
Kai and Earl Rozas Professor  
Department of Physiology  
LSU Health Science Center

**Stella (Styliani) Goulopoulou, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Lawrence D. Longo, MD Center for Perinatal Biology  
Dept. Basic Sciences, Division of Physiology  
Dept. Gynecology & Obstetrics  
Loma Linda University School of Medicine

**Paula Gregory, PhD**

Professor  
Physiology and Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth



**Stacy Griner, PhD, MPH**

Assistant Professor  
Health Behavior and Health Systems  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Denise Inman, PhD**

Vice Chair & Associate Professor  
Assoc Professor of Graduate Education & Research  
North Texas Eye Research Institute  
Pharmaceutical Sciences  
UNT System College of Pharmacy

**Jayoung Kim, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Pharmaceutical Sciences  
College of Pharmacy  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Raghu Krishnamoorthy, PhD**

Professor  
Pharmacology and Neuroscience  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Dana Litt, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Health Behavior & Health Systems  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Yutao Liu, MD, PhD**

Professor  
Director, CBA Graduate Program  
Cellular Biology and Anatomy  
Center for Biotechnology and Genomic Medicine  
James & Jean Culver Vision Discovery Institute  
Augusta University

**Rong Ma, MD, PhD**

Professor, Physiology and Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Robert Mallet, PhD**

Regents Professor  
Physiology & Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Elizabeth Martin, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Medicine  
Section Hematology and Oncology  
Tulane University

**Keisa Mathis, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Internal Medicine – Rheumatic Diseases  
UT Southwestern Medical Center

**Eun-Young Mun, PhD**

Regents Professor  
Dept of Population & Community Health  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Rajesh Nandy, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Dept of Population & Community Health  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Melissa Petersen, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Family Medicine and  
Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Nicole Phillips, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Microbiology, Immunology, and Genetics  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Jeremie Pina**

DDS/PhD Candidate  
*Fellow*, Eunice Kennedy Shriver  
National Institute of Child Health and Human  
Development (NICHD)  
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

**Guenevere Rae, Ph.D.**

Assistant Dean for Basic Science Education  
Director of Office of Medical Education  
Assoc Professor of Structural & Cellular Biology  
Tulane University School of Medicine

**Austin Reynolds, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Anthropology  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Baylor University

**Corinna Ross, Ph.D.**

Director  
Southwest National Primate Research Center  
Texas Biomedical Research Institute

**Jennifer Severance, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Internal Medicine & Geriatrics  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Xiangrong Shi, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Pharmacology and Neuroscience  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth



**Michael Smith, PhD**

Professor  
Physiology & Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Dorota Stankowska, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Director of SBS Biotechnology MS Program  
Microbiology, Immunology, and Genetics  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Nathalie Sumien, PhD**

Associate Professor Chair, IACUC  
Interim Chair, Pharmacology and Neuroscience  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Xiaochao Tan, PhD** Assistant

Professor  
Department of Medicine  
Tulane University

**Aaron J. Trask, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Center for Cardiovascular Research  
Departments of Pediatrics & Physiology and  
Cell Biology  
The Ohio State University College of Medicine

**Jonathan Tune, PhD**

Professor, Chair  
Physiology and Anatomy  
School of Biomedical Sciences  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Scott Walters, PhD**

Regents Professor  
Dept of Population and Community Health  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Theodore Weyand, PhD**

Professor Emeritus  
Cell Biology & Anatomy  
LSU Health Sciences Center, New Orleans

**April Wiechmann, PhD** Associate

Professor  
Internal Medicine & Geriatrics  
Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Hongli Wu, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Pharmaceutical Sciences  
North Texas Eye Research Institute  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Liang-Jun Yan, PhD**

Professor  
Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Institute for Healthy Aging  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Jiaqi Yu, PhD**

Assistant Director  
Instructional Innovation and Project Management  
Department of Educational Development  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth

**Zhengyang Zhou, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
Dept of Population & Community Health  
School of Public Health  
UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth



# Thank you

The Division of Research and Innovation would like to thank our reviewers for dedicating their time and expertise to act as a reviewer for the FY 24 Research Enhancement Assistance Program.