U2D2: The University of Illinois Cancer Center-UICentre Drug Discovery Program

The University of Illinois Cancer Center (UICC) is partnering with UICentre, the campus-wide drug discovery initiative at UIC, to launch a collaborative grant program entitled U2D2, directed at the development of new anti-cancer therapeutics. UICentre, in partnership with the High-Throughput Screening and Biophysics Cores of the RRC, exists to create and support drug discovery collaborations by providing bioassay development, chemical library screening, hit counterscreening and biophysical confirmation of compound binding and activity, hit-to-lead medicinal chemistry optimization, drug metabolism and pharmacokinetic (DMPK), and lead compound selection. It is anticipated that several U2D2 funding opportunities will be announced in the period FY2023-2026. In this Inaugural RFA, U2D2 is offering seed grants for up to $25,000 for a one-year duration focused on small-molecule drug discovery. Future U2D2 offerings may expand to additional drug discovery approaches, such as biologic or nanoparticle development.

Inaugural RFA Requirements:
1. The seed grant proposal must be related to small-molecule cancer drug discovery, including an effort in one or more of these components:
   a. High-throughput screening and/or assay development
   b. Hit-to-lead medicinal chemistry optimization of an anticancer small molecule
   c. Lead optimization, including DMPK studies
   d. Target validation involving synthetic chemical probes
2. The PI must be a UI Cancer Center member
3. Budgeting guidelines ($25,000 max):
   a. No more than 25% of the budget may be spent on personnel in the PI/Co-I’s laboratories.
   b. Estimated funding for UICentre contribution (personnel, reagents, DMPK) to the proposed work should be included in the budget estimate. Applicants can receive budget estimate assistance by contacting drugdiscovery@uic.edu, no later than 11/28/22.
   c. Budget details will be finalized once projects are selected.

Application Format:
Applications must be submitted as a single pdf consisting of two parts (A and B):
A. Application Narrative (two pages max, 0.5 inch margin, 10 pt) which includes the following
   1. Names, affiliations, e-mails of PI and Co-Is (roles specified)
   2. Clinician collaborators that may be involved at present or in the future if identified
   3. Title of Invention Disclosure, if any, and name of OTM technology manager
   4. Brief description of the biological target/pathway
   5. Description of the bioassay that validates the biological target in a relevant model
   6. Molecular structures of any small molecule hits identified to date
   7. Description of the planned animal model to establish proof of concept, including IACUC protocol number (if available)
   8. Novelty in target/indication/assay (advantage over competition)
   9. A precise and significant milestone that would mark success for the funded project
   10. A brief description of how the accomplishment of this milestone would position the PI/team to achieve a larger translational goal (supported by funding)
   11. Budget Justification
B. NIH Biosketches of the PI and any named Co-Is.

Non-responsive applications will not be reviewed. Applications must be emailed to drugdiscovery@uic.edu by Friday, December 9, 2022 (5 pm). Awards will be announced in January 2023.