

## **Interdisciplinary Research in Aging (IRA) Curriculum**

### **Session Content for the T32 Fellow IRA**

Discussions will be led by Drs. Grande and Vasunilashorn

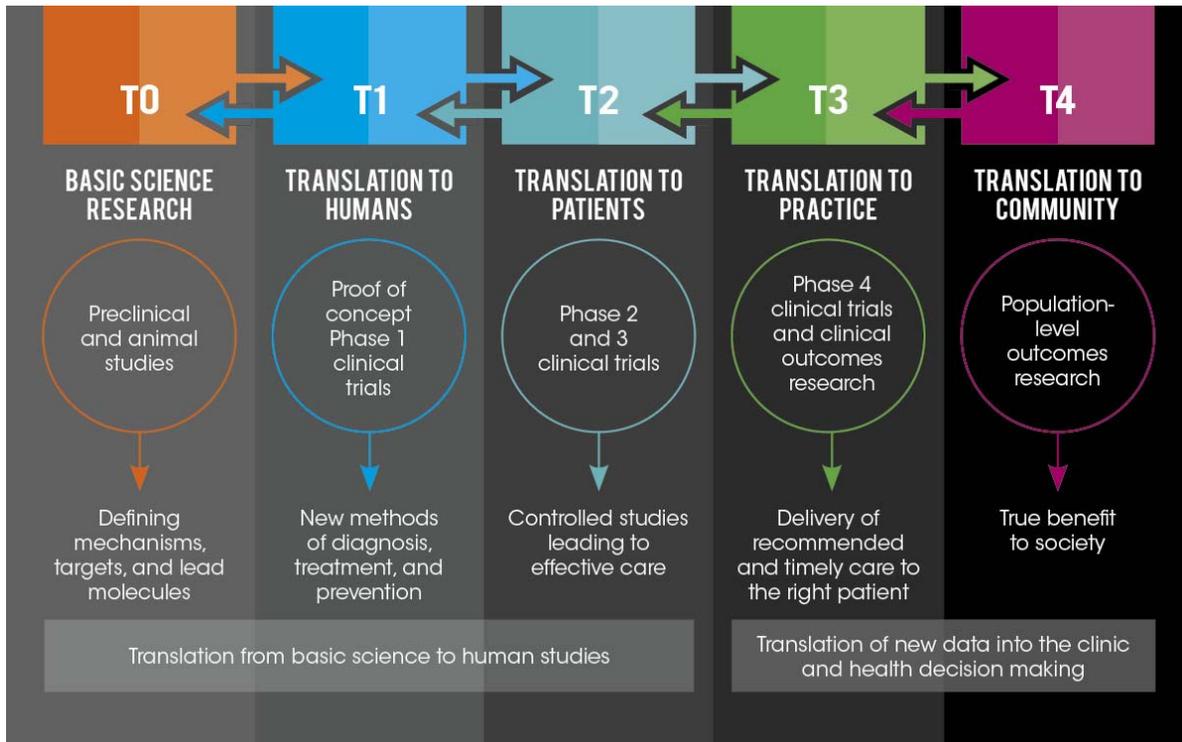
Session 1 Round Robin. This one-hour meeting is designed to introduce collaboration and engage fellows in a hands-on experience. Each fellow is asked to provide the IRA leaders with one specific aim related to their T32 research. IRA leaders will generate one page for each specific aim with the aim printed on the top of the page. The IRA leaders and fellows will sit at a table or in a circle. Each T32 fellow will be presented with the specific aim of another fellow. The fellow is asked to think about their own field of study and their own expertise and how they might contribute or approach that research question. They will be given five minutes and asked to write 1-2 sentences describing how they envision their expertise contributing to the specific aim listed on the form. The fellow will be asked to fold the form to cover their writing while also keeping the specific aim exposed. The fellows will then pass their form to the left and the process is repeated (the order of the forms will be determined by the IRA leaders so that no fellow is given their own specific aim). The process will be repeated so that each fellow provides a comment on each of the other fellows' specific aim. The final pass to the left will result in each fellow receiving their own specific aim with the comments from the other T32 fellows. The remainder of the meeting will be dedicated to discussion of the exercise and the comments and ideas provided by fellows. Given the diversity of backgrounds and research expertise, fellows are likely to be presented and asked to provide comment on areas and research topics that are distant from their own area of expertise. This is by design as the purpose of the exercise is to assist fellows in thinking creatively and to consider how the answers to pressing questions in the study of aging will require collaboration.

Session 2 Real Life Collaboration. This one-hour meeting will involve inviting a research mentor (e.g., Dr. Lipsitz, Dr. Samelson) from the T32 program to present to the fellows an overview of their research and how collaboration has shaped and informed their research and their plans for future collaboration. The mentor will be asked to utilize the T0-T4, adapted from Khoury et al (2007), to describe his/her approach to research translation. T0-T4 is a descriptive approach that can be helpful in illustrating the research continuum from basic (wet lab) to community implementation. This approach embraces a bidirectional process in which broad implementation (community) serves to inform more circumscribed research endeavors (please see below). Fellows will be allowed to ask the mentor about his/her collaborations and experiences. Additionally, fellows will be asked to utilize the same approach in describing their current research and research goals to be presented during Session 3.

Session 3 Fellows Collaboration. This one-hour meeting will involve each T32 fellow presenting his/her current research and future goals of research. During this brief 8-10 minute presentation, each fellow will be asked to consider the role of collaboration in his/her research goals and how specific collaborations are likely to inform his/her research. They will utilize the T0-T4 model employed by the research mentor as the framework for presenting their research. IRA leaders and fellows will be asked to engage in discussion and provide feedback for the presentations. This session also reviews the 10 principles of good interdisciplinary teamwork published by Nancarrow et. al., including positive leadership; communication strategies and structures; personal rewards, training and development; appropriate resources and procedures; appropriate skill mix; supportive team climate; individual characteristics that support interdisciplinary team work; clarity of vision; quality and outcomes of care; and respecting and understanding roles. The brief presentations provide a focal point for this discussion, and

importantly, provide the opportunity for fellows to map out a plan for future interdisciplinary collaboration.

Khoury MJ. et al. The continuum of translation research in genomic medicine: how can we accelerate the appropriate integration of human genomic discoveries into health care and disease prevention? *Genet Med* 2007;9(10):665-674.



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