

BERD core implements 'Research on a Napkin' consulting model

Posted on 10/11/16 at 10:45 am



GEM pilot study 'Research on a Napkin'-style consultation

A new Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) initiative is bringing together experts from diverse fields to help advance translational research at UB.

Directors of the CTSA Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD) core recently coordinated with the Department of Biostatistics, School of Public Health and Public Health Professions, to make faculty available to assist UB researchers who are interested in submitting [Genome, Environment and Microbiome \(GEM\)](#) pilot study applications.

Six GEM pilot study applicants looking for help preparing their grant applications were allotted half-hour time slots to present and discuss the working draft of their proposal with a panel of Biostatistics Department faculty. The first session was filled within 10 minutes of the announcement being posted, demonstrating the valuable role that the CTSA plays in facilitating collaborations between local researchers.

At the end of their meeting, participants received immediate feedback from the full panel of biostatisticians. The format of the meetings followed the "Research on a Napkin" template that has been discussed in recent [Association for Clinical and Translational Science BERD Special Interest Group](#) monthly conference calls.

Applicants, and other researchers, can also avail themselves of the services provided by BERD core experts by way of the [CTSA service portal](#).

"The proposals were all very interesting and speak to the strength of the local GEM-related research community," said Daniel Gaile, PhD, BERD co-director. "The statistical considerations for some projects were relatively straightforward, while others push at the boundaries of existing methodologies. That led to an enjoyable and stimulating exchange of ideas among all of the meeting participants."

"Research on a Napkin" work sessions will soon be offered for other pilot study award opportunities.

"Given the positive response we received for the sessions from GEM applicants, we plan to conduct similar sessions associated with other funding mechanisms, including the next round of

[CTSA pilot study](#) applications,” said BERD Director Gregory E. Wilding, PhD. “We feel that, with the input of BERD scientists, the resulting applications are stronger and have a greater chance of being funded.”

An effort to spread genome and microbiome literacy across campus and to the general public is part of the university’s vision of addressing global challenges locally by means of interdisciplinary [“communities of excellence.”](#)

SHOWN ABOVE: Faculty from the Department of Biostatistics in the School of Public Health and Health Professions consult with a GEM pilot study applicant. From left to right: Dan Gaile, PhD, research assistant professor; David Tritchler, PhD, leader of the Biostatistics Genomics Group; Guan Yu, PhD, assistant professor; Ziqiang Chen, a funded CTSA graduate research assistant; and Supriya Mahajan, PhD, Department of Medicine, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, who was preparing an application.