



# Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative (SHERC)

Pilot Project Program  
Information Session

September 10, 2024

# SHERC Overview

## What is SHERC?

[SHERC](#) is a [National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities \(NIMHD\)](#) grant-funded cooperative agreement (NIH #U54MD012388) within the [Center for Health Equity Research](#) at NAU. SHERC is part of the NIMHD's Research Centers in Minority Institutions Partnership.

## Overall Goal of SHERC

- To increase basic biomedical, clinical, and behavioral research at NAU to address **health disparities** and advance **health equity** among diverse populations of the southwestern United States. SHERC emphasizes working closely with community partners to achieve these goals.



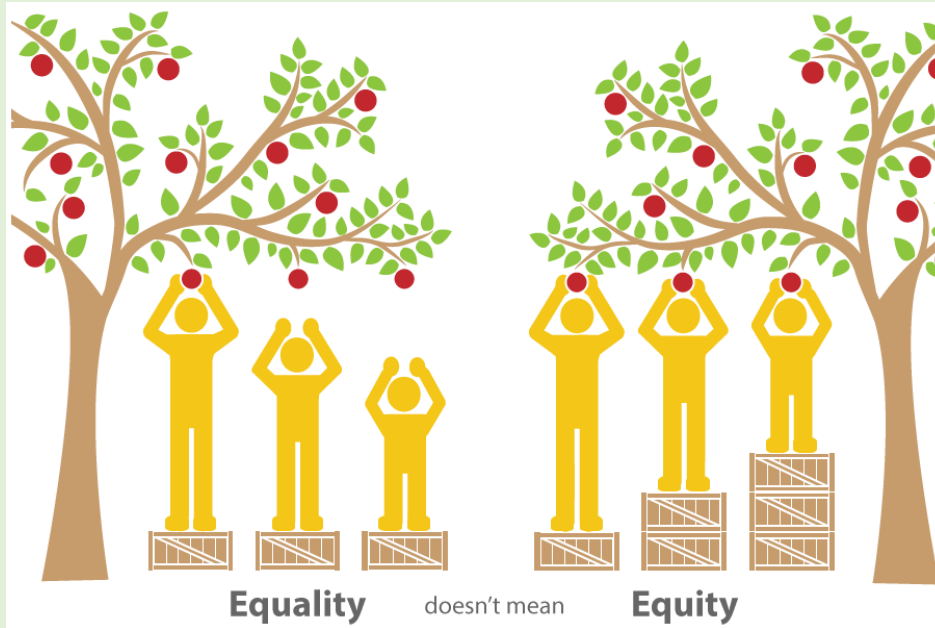
Center for Health  
Equity Research

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# What is Health Equity?

“Health equity” is the ***assurance of the conditions*** for optimal health for all people



Source: Saskatoon Health Region

## Achieving health equity requires:

- Valuing all individuals and populations equally
- Recognizing and rectifying historical injustices
- Providing resources according to need
- Health disparities will be eliminated when health equity is achieved

Jones, C. (2014). Systems of Power, Axes of Inequality: Parallels, Intersections, Braiding the Strands. *Medical Care*, 52(10 (Suppl 3)), S71–S75.

# SHERC Cores

- SHERC consists of five cores that all interact synergistically to promote health equity research.
- Each of the SHERC cores provides distinct opportunities to increase research capacity at NAU.
- Examples include research trainings, methodological software, technical assistance, and funding for research and development of community partnerships.



# Investigator Development Core Team



Dirk de Heer, PhD, MPH  
Professor, Department of  
Health Sciences

**Role:** Lead



Nicky Teufel-Shone, PhD  
Professor, Department of  
Health Sciences

**Role:** Co-Lead



Christine Smith  
Program Manager

**Role:** Core  
administration and  
research  
management support



Emily Cope, PhD  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Biological  
Sciences

**Role:** Co-Investigator,  
SHERC Leadership  
Development Program



# Investigator Development Core Pilot Project Program (PPP) Goals

## PPP provides:

- 1) support and mentoring to early-stage investigators (ESI) in health equity research.

*NIH defines an **Early-Stage Investigator (ESI)** as a Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) who has completed their terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever date is later, within the past 10 years and who has not previously competed successfully as a PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award.*

- 2) seed funding to establish strong and successful programs on research in health equity

## PPP objective:

To support scientifically rigorous research projects that will support investigators' competitiveness for NIH and other external health and health equity-related research funding

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# Pilot Project Program Investigator Eligibility & Funding

Projects will be funded for \$50,000 per year for 2 years. A maximum of 3 proposals will be funded (per grant year).

## Eligible Rank:

- Assistant Professor (tenure eligible)
- Assistant Research Professor
- Assistant Clinical Professor
- Assistant Teaching Professor
- Assistant Professor of Practice
- Lecturer
- Post-Doctoral scholar

## The PPP is open to investigators who:

- (1) are NAU regular, benefit eligible, employees;
- (2) are eligible to serve as principal investigator on extramural grants per NAU policy <https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/principal-investigator-eligibility/>;
- (3) and have not previously competed successfully as a PD/PI for a substantial NIH independent research award.

## Eligibility Notes:

- *Individuals from underrepresented backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply to the PPP, but it is not a program requirement.*
- *Faculty at the Associate or Full Professor rank are not eligible to apply.*

# Pilot Project Program Research Projects Foci

## Foci: Basic biomedical, behavioral, or clinical research

*Strongly encouraged:* Pilot projects that focus on research that address health equity of diseases/conditions and communities/populations affected

### Tips for writing the Letter of Intent (LOI):

- Align research objectives to goals of SHERC. See LOI guidelines on the PPP webpage for SHERC goals and health equity framework.
  - Scientifically rigorous
  - Topic relevant to community priorities
  - Strong team with investigators from different areas of expertise.
- LOIs will be reviewed and if accepted, will be invited for full proposal submission. LOIs are due November 4, 2024!
  - PIs will receive individualized mentoring and a grant writing workshop prior to full proposal submission.



# Review Criteria

a. Goals of the proposed research
b. Objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop a new technology)
c. Summary of the expected outcome, including impact of the results in the research field(s) involved; and
d. How the objectives align with the goals of SHERC and relevance to health equity. (See definitions of health equities and health disparities written in the LOI guidelines document)
e. Investigators
Is a co-investigator from different area of expertise named? Is the investigative team appropriate?

Impact	Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Medium	4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

- (1) The project's potential to address community priorities and make an impact.
- (2) The project's potential for community engagement and/or sharing back results or progress to stakeholders.

# Individualized Mentorship

## Individualized Mentorship Program

- Grant workshop
- Mentorship from SHERC prior to full proposal submission
- Funded external mentor funded, brief individual development plan
- Consulting Sessions: Career development
- Community dissemination of findings
- Facilitate external mentorship and partnership across other RCMI partner institutions
- Other career enhancement activities and resources

**Outcomes:** productivity, career advancement, mentorship quality



# Pilot Project Program Timeline

Date	PPP Timeline
<b>November 4, 2024</b>	LOI Due Date
<b>November 12 &amp; 13, 2024</b>	NIH grant proposal grant development workshop, Lucy Deckard
<b>November 25, 2024</b>	LOI feedback and full proposal notifications sent out to applicants
<b>November 25 – December 20, 2024</b>	Mentoring meetings with SHERC Core Leads & full proposal PIs
<b>January 27 &amp; 28, 2025</b>	Individual proposal consultations with Lucy Deckard
<b>February 10, 2025</b>	Full applications due
<b>March 7, 2025</b>	Feedback and status notifications sent to full proposal PIs
<b>Late April, 2025</b>	Selected applications sent to NIMHD for final review and award start dates begin after June 1, 2025



# Pilot Project Program Success

Since 2017, the PPP funded [28 pilot projects](#), engaging project leads across 4 colleges representing 11 academic units, and 2 Centers (Pathogen and Microbiome Institute & Center for Health Equity Research)

Current SHERC Pilot Research Projects		
PI/Year Funded	Department	Title of Project
Duval, Jared, PhD	School of Informatics	Addressing Speech Health Equity Issues in the Southwestern US Using a Telehealth Speech Therapy Game
Cerino, Eric, PhD	Psychological Sciences	The Roles of Daily Stressor Control and Social Determinants of Health in Cognitive Aging: Examining Modifiable Contributors to Cognitive Health Disparities in Daily Life
Tara Bautista, PhD	Psychological Sciences	Mindfulness-based Intervention for Latina Mothers who Drink Alcohol to Cope
Diana Calvo, PhD	Civil Engineering, Construction Mgmt & Environmental Engineering	Water Quality Revealed: Is exposure to Pathogens Higher for Native-American Communities in the Southwest?
Maureen Yoder, PhD	College of Nursing	Is it a gut feeling? Associations Between Individual Biopsychosocial Determinants, Diet Quality, Gastrointestinal Health, and Disease Activity in Adults with Rheumatoid Arthritis
Colleen Hackett, PhD	Criminology and Criminal Justice	The Impact of Shelter Type on the Health of Adults Experiencing Homelessness in Northern AZ
Chandler Roe, PhD	Pathogen and Microbiome Institute	Demonstrating Onchocerca Lupi Vector Competency on the Navajo Nation
Tochukwu Ikwunne, PhD	School of Informatics	CardioCare Quest: A Co-Created Game for Improving Hypertension Treatment Adherence



# Thank You!

# Questions?