Call for Proposals to Advance Scholarship in COMSEP

Purpose

The purpose of this initiative is to promote and support innovative educational scholarship that is designed, implemented, and evaluated by COMSEP members. Selected educational grant(s) will be supported up to a total of $5,000 each. Grant funding is contingent upon available funds.

Mentorship and its associated feedback and guidance are important to COMSEP and so each grant application should include information about the principal investigator's project mentor, described in greater detail below. The total funding period of the grant is 24 months; hence projects that can be completed in 18 months are advised so that the remainder of the time can be used for data analysis/presentation and manuscript preparation.

Acknowledgements

This grant program is supported, in part, by generous donations from the Richard T. Sarkin Foundation, celebrating the late Dr. Sarkin's commitment to creative and innovative teaching and learning in Pediatrics, from private donations, and from Aquifer, a worldwide consortium of medical educators working together to transform health care education through the effective use of technology in teaching and assessment (https://aquifer.org/).

Eligibility

The principal investigator of the COMSEP grant and any co-PIs must be a member of COMSEP at the time of application and throughout the funding period; to learn how to become a member click on the following link: https://www.comsep.org/become-a-member/. The topic of the grant proposal must align with COMSEP's mission and strategic plan which can be found at this link: https://www.comsep.org/vision-sp-guiding-principles/

Previous COMSEP grantees are welcome to apply with a new project or clearly delineated "next steps" in a previously completed project. Slicing of data is viewed upon negatively. Projects that have not been completed at the time of application are not eligible for funding. PIs must disclose if their projects are being supported by other funds; projects receiving funding from other sources may still be eligible for a COMSEP grant if the COMSEP award would extend or deepen the work and does not request budgetary allocation for work that the other grant is already supporting.

Application and Submission Process

You can submit your application materials by clicking the links in the panel on the left-hand side of this screen. The deadline for submitting an application is noted on the grants instructions page.

As requested by several COMSEP members, here are two examples of funded COMSEP grant proposals (PIs for the 2 proposals- Lavjay Butani and Ian Chua-have given permission to post them). There are several ways to approach these proposals, so these are offered in an effort to be helpful, but you need not feel constrained by them. We have annotated one of the grant proposals (PI: Lavjay Butani) with comments and pointers that we hope might be of use to you as you write your grants.

Grant Submission Example 1 and 2

Proposals

- Projects may include any field of research that focuses on enhancing undergraduate pediatric medical education. Projects might include educational scholarship related to curriculum development (e.g., design, implementation and scholarly evaluation of the impact of innovative curricula), development and validation of assessment or evaluation tools, development and evaluation of instructional materials, or other research focused on enhancing undergraduate pediatric education. Research proposals topics should be aligned with COMSEP's mission. We welcome all proposals related to undergraduate medical education in Pediatrics!

- All proposals must have IRB approval (if human subjects are involved) in order for grant funds to be awarded. Realizing this takes time, investigators must, at a minimum, demonstrate evidence that their protocols have been submitted to their IRB at the time of submission of the grant application to COMSEP. This could be in the form of a copy of a) an email from the IRB or b) a screen shot from the IRB submission website, documenting successful submission of the grant proposal.

- The project must identify a **single PI** for all communication and responsibilities regarding deadlines, funds allocation to the PI's institution, and submission of reports to the COMSEP Grant Committee. If work is being shared across institutions, it is acceptable for site investigators to be named in the project narrative. COMSEP Grant Committee members are not eligible to be PIs or site investigators on a COMSEP grant. A COMSEP member can only be a PI on ONE grant per submission cycle.

- The PI must identify at least one mentor for the project whose role is to support the proposed scholarship and to assist and provide consultation to the investigative team. This is the case irrespective of whether the PI is new to research/scholarship or an experienced researcher. In the latter case, the PI might select a mentor with expertise to expand the PI's repertoire of skills, such as related to the project's focus, or in the analysis or scholarly writing involved in the project. The mentor may either be a 1) faculty member at the PI's home institution or 2) COMSEP member from any institution. It is acceptable to have more than one mentor to guide the PI in different aspects of the study design/analysis. Please note that COMSEP Grant Committee members cannot serve as formal mentors to the research team. However, we are here to assist in any way we can to help facilitate the team's work and can provide advice/consultation to the team at any stage during or after the submission and implementation phases of the project.

- COMSEP grants must include direct costs only; COMSEP grants do not provide indirect costs to the home institution or university. Funds cannot be utilized for travel to COMSEP meetings for the PI or site investigators. With appropriate justification that aligns with disseminating the grant project's findings or learning information or skills specific to this project's activities, travel may be approved to other conferences. While the funds can be used to support the effort of consultants (such as statisticians, research assistant etc.) funds CANNOT be used to support the PI's or site investigator's SALARY. While funds can be used to defray publication costs, beware of predatory publishers. For more information please review this link (https://blog.unmc.edu/library/2017/04/03/identifying-predatory-publishers/)

- Work that has been previously published will not be accepted, but proposals to conduct next steps or next iteration or expansion/continuation of such work will be considered for review.

Proposal Priorities
- Grant proposals that align with COMSEP's Strategic Plan, are responsive to the requirements of this Call for Proposals and present a sound approach to an important topic or potentially valuable innovation in pediatric undergraduate medical education and beyond will receive the highest priority.

- Awardees must plan to have data for submission to either the platform or poster session of a future COMSEP meeting (within 2 years). Acceptance for presentation is not guaranteed, but submission by grant awardees is required. In addition, grantees will be expected to present some data, even if preliminary, at a Work-In-Progress Session during the COMSEP Annual meeting the following year. Thus, the scope of work for the project should be reasonable and practical, such that it is feasible to generate preliminary data within 9-12 months and can be completed in about 18 months, with a final few months for writing and dissemination activities. The total funding period of the grant is 24 months. A pilot project to generate data for a larger grant submission in the effort to inform or scale up the study in the future is strongly encouraged.

Format of the COMSEP Grant (to be uploaded as an Adobe PDF file only)
All proposals must include the following information in the order outlined below:
- **Abstract**
    - Limit length to 300 words of text
    - Include the project's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims
    - Include a description of the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals
    - Write in plain language, so even a non-researcher can understand the importance of the project

- **Introduction**
  - Why the topic is important to undergraduate pediatric medical education (and if appropriate, to other learners/learner levels)
  - A literature review that articulates what is already known about the topic and identifies the existing gap
  - A clear statement of hypothesis (if a research study) or a clear description of project scope and purpose (if an educational innovation project)
- **Methods/Materials**
  - Description of a methodology that is appropriate to the question(s) or project plan
  - A clear and detailed study design including elements such as: a description of population to be studied or involved, the types of instruments or techniques planned for measurement with a rationale (including validity evidence) for the instruments selected, and if instruments or materials are to be developed, whether this is feasible for the scope and timetable of the project
- **Evaluation/Analysis**
  - An evaluation plan that is appropriate for the study design and one that addresses each proposed outcome measure.
  - Rationale for the evaluation(s) or statistical methods selected (PIs may benefit from consultation/input from a statistical expert and/or qualitative researcher in developing this section). Members of COMSEP's Research and Scholarship Collaborative have expressed interest and willingness in providing consultation to grant applicants. Please email requests to info@comsep.org and the Grants Committee will connect you with the appropriate party.
- **Anticipated Outcomes and Results**
  - Discussion of the anticipated and possible alternative outcomes and how they will be informative in advancing the field
- **Dissemination Plan**
  - Describe your plans for sharing the results of this study (eg, submissions to COMSEP, PAS; peer-review publication).
- **Future steps**
  - Description of the next steps (for example, scale up or further funding potential), generalized use of the project product or findings, or potential integration into other learning settings
- **Budget and Timeline**
  - An adequately detailed budget with clear justification for funds and one that conforms to previously stated criteria
  - A realistic and practical timeline that will permit study completion in 18 months

Proposal narratives should be limited to 2 single-spaced pages or 1000 words not including the following
- The cover page/initial information (including the institutional grants officer name/contact information)
- The abstract
- a list of works cited (reference list) at the end of the proposal
- the budget (with justification): 1 page
- the time line

Other documents to include are
- Brief biosketches (no more than 2 pages each for the PI and mentor)
- Letters of support from the Department Chair and at least one Project Mentor; the Project Mentors should explicitly describe their expertise in being able to contribute to this scholarly project and their willingness to guide the PI and facilitate completion of the project
- Evidence of IRB submission or approval
- Proposals should be in a font not smaller than 12 pt, with margins not narrower than 1 inch at top, bottom, and each side.
- **A single appendix** is permitted to provide supporting documentation such as a facilitator guide, list of survey questions, or information on study instruments (limited to 1 page).

Review Process and Guidelines

- All submissions will be reviewed by at least two members of the COMSEP Grant Committee. We are committed to providing an instructive critique for each proposal, including those that are not accepted. This will allow investigators to pursue their ideas by paying attention to reviewer comments and potentially re-writing their proposals for other funding opportunities. Proposals will be judged "Approved for Funding," "Not Approved for Funding," and "Not initially approved for funding but resubmission recommended." The Committee reserves the right to ask for changes in the grant before funding is approved.
- The Committee will give highest priority to those projects that are aligned with COMSEP's Strategic Plan, advance undergraduate pediatric medical education in innovative ways, adhere to the guidelines listed above, are appropriate in scope, have an appropriate budget, have the potential for generalizability, have strong mentorship outlined and have the potential for future grant submissions.
- The number of proposals funded will be dependent on the number and quality of submissions.

Acquiring Funds, Progress and Final Reports
- It is the PI's responsibility to see that the grants office or officer designated in the proposal requests the project funds no later than 90 days after the date on the letter confirming successful application/funding. The start date of the grant is considered as the date on the letter confirming successful application/funding. Funds not retrieved within 90 days of the award letter are no longer available for the project.
- The PI of each funded proposal will submit a progress report at a minimum at 9 and 21 months following the awarding of funds (for review by the COMSEP Grant Committee). This report must include 1) progress to date, 2) barriers and strategies/plans to address these, 3) budget expenditures, and 4) project activity anticipated in the next 12 months and/or dissemination plans.
- Funds remaining after 24 months must be returned to COMSEP if a request for no-cost extension is not made by the PI and approved by the COMSEP Grant Committee six (6) weeks before the 2-year period of the grant terminates.
- All presentations or publications of scholarly work must acknowledge COMSEP as the sponsor of the work, with the following suggested narrative: This work was supported by a grant to the author from the Council on Medical Student Education in Pediatrics (COMSEP), with funding contributed in part by Aquifer and in part by the Richard T. Sarkin Foundation for Medical Education to COMSEP.

This is an exciting opportunity for COMSEP members to advance their educational scholarship with innovative research, to expand the scholarly activities of COMSEP members, departments and the COMSEP organization as a whole. Please email Dr. Caroline Paul, Chair of the COMSEP Grant Committee, at info@comsep.org with questions or if you would like assistance in networking with collaborators within or outside of COMSEP.