

Three South Carolina investigators receive \$10 million in NSF grant awards

The South Carolina Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research/Institutional Development Award (SC EPSCoR/IDeA) Program is pleased to announce that three researchers from three universities in South Carolina have been awarded a combined \$10 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) aimed at research to understand the relationship between genetic material and physical characteristics due to gene expression and environmental influences.

NSF made eight awards totaling \$41.7 million aimed at building capacity to research a national priority area – Genomes-to-Phenomes. The awards are made through NSF EPSCoR as part of its Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Track-2 investment strategy. RII Track-2 Program is intended to build national research strength by initiating research collaborations across institutions in two or more EPSCoR jurisdictions (states and territories). This year's four-year awards involve 21 institutions in 16 jurisdictions.

The two awards are made to **Drs. Sarah Harcum** (Clemson University) and **Hippokratis Kiaris** (University of South Carolina). Earlier this year, both professors received seed funding from the SC EPSCoR program of up to \$7,000 each to assist them in developing their proposals to the NSF Track-2 competition. These seed funds provide assistance for travel to other jurisdictions, host local workshops, retain proposal reviewers/consultants or technical writers, etc. as appropriate for submitting a competitive proposal to the NSF.



Harcum's grant, "RII Track-2 FEC: Advanced Biomanufacturing: Catalyzing Improved Host Development and High Quality Medicines through Genome to Phenome Predictions" was awarded in the amount of \$6 million. Harcum's grant also involves investigators from the University of Delaware, Tulane University and Delaware State University.

Kiaris's grant, "RII Track-2 FEC-Genome to fitness: An Analysis of the Stress Response in *Peromyscus*" was awarded in the amount of \$4 million and involves researchers from Claflin University and Auburn University. **Dr. Ananda Mondal** from Claflin University is one of five faculty investigators included on Kiaris's grant. Mondal will receive \$150,000 for four years to support one graduate student in Biotechnology.

"These awards are very important to the State of South Carolina," said Dr. Nadim Aziz, SC EPSCoR/IDeA State Office Director. "This year, NSF

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awarded a total of eight awards from 16 EPSCoR-eligible jurisdictions. We are very delighted that our State EPSCoR Program provided the seed funding to support the preparation of these two winning proposals. As a Program whose goal is to increase South Carolina's research capabilities, we are excited that we were a part of this success. We cannot be more pleased that these two investigators are bringing in a combined \$10 million in scientific research to our state. We are even more pleased that Kiaris's grant includes an investigator from Claflin, one of the Predominately Undergraduate Institutions (PUI) – especially one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).”

Harcum and Kiaris join Drs. Stephen Foulger (Clemson) and Andreas Heyden (USC) as NSF Track-2 grant recipients who also received seed funding from SC EPSCoR in the past two years.

LEARN MORE:

Dr. Sarah Harcum

<http://www.clemson.edu/cecas/departments/bioe/people/faculty-staff/directory/harcum.html>

Grant abstract: https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=1736123

Dr. Hippokratis Kiaris

https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/pharmacy/faculty-staff/kiaris_hippokratis.php

Grant abstract: https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=1736150

Dr. Ananda Mondal

<http://www.claflin.edu/academics-research/faculty-research/meet-our-faculty/ananda-mondal>

August 4, 2017