

Candidate Information – Candidate 1

During my residency at [REDACTED], I discovered a passionate interest in the functional and anatomic disorders of the female pelvic floor and their considerable impact on women's health. I have become fascinated with understanding the dynamic anatomy of the pelvic floor and its integration with functional activity. I am particularly interested in optimizing the medical and surgical treatments of pelvic floor disorders, and I plan to focus on this area of research throughout my career as a Urogynecologist. Throughout my training, I have been dedicated to research and developing an academic career. I have participated in research since my time as an undergraduate at [REDACTED], and through medical school and residency. I have presented findings at national meetings and am currently completing manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals. **My long-term career goal is to improve women's health in Urogynecology through clinical and surgical excellence and innovative independently-funded research.**

As a first year Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (FPMRS) fellow at [REDACTED], I am motivated to sharpen my investigational skills and to develop into an independent researcher. I want to perfect my ability to design and complete high impact and clinically relevant projects that result in superior quality data, statistical analysis and dissemination of our findings through peer-reviewed publication and oral presentations. A key factor in developing these critical research skills is inspired mentorship, and I am fortunate to have enthusiastic and experienced faculty who have cultivated a collaborative environment for developing research ideas and integrating them into our busy clinical practice. For this project, which investigates preventing postoperative constipation following pelvic reconstructive surgery, I have assembled an exceptional team of mentors. My primary mentor is Dr. [REDACTED], who serves as the Urogynecology Division Chief and as the site Principal Investigator of the NIH-sponsored Pelvic Floor Disorders Network (PFDN) at our institution. Dr. [REDACTED] is a prolific clinical researcher through many well-designed and high impact studies. My co-mentor is Dr. [REDACTED], an active clinician-scientist who is the Director of Research for our Division of Urogynecology. Dr. [REDACTED] is funded by a NICHD K23 award and has a significant amount of protected research time to dedicate to fellows. Dr. [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] Division of Gastroenterology is my project advisor. Dr. [REDACTED] is a clinical gastroenterologist with a focus on functional bowel disorders and the treatment of gastrointestinal issues in women with pelvic floor disorders. Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] have partnered together on multiple projects and have both worked with Dr. [REDACTED] previously as a collaborator for the PFDN. I am fortunate to benefit from this experienced team of mentors, who highly value sharing their expertise by training future independent investigators. I am able to utilize the diverse resources at [REDACTED] through this interdisciplinary collaboration, which is particularly important in our field as the pelvic floor intimately integrates multiple organ systems and functions. In addition to my talented team of mentors, our division is enriched with dedicated and knowledgeable research coordinators and nursing staff.

I relish the opportunity to foster my clinical investigation skills with coursework reinforced with practical experience with study design and implementation, data collection and analysis, and ultimately robust manuscript production and presentations at national meetings. I fortunately am given ample protected research time within my schedule over the entire three years. The AUGS Foundation Fellow Research Award is a critical next step in my career development and will be invaluable for augmenting my clinical research skills with this proposed project investigating the optimal regimen to prevent postoperative constipation following pelvic reconstructive surgery. I will sharpen my investigative skills of study design and protocol implementation, subject recruitment, enrollment and retention, data collection, statistical analysis and preparation of oral presentations and manuscripts. I will establish a robust foundation for excellent quality research by learning to optimally conduct and complete a double-blind placebo-controlled randomized trial, a vital study design to master. However I will be able to apply these techniques to other investigative designs for rigorous research. My clinical interests are extensive in Urogynecology; however I have piqued my current interest in the surgical management of pelvic floor disorders and improving outcomes. Optimizing clinical and surgical outcomes is absolutely essential to our patients and to advancing the state of the art in FPMRS.

I aspire to a life-long goal to expand the fund of knowledge and evidence-based practice within our field, and I am dedicated to becoming an independent clinician-scientist and academic leader in Urogynecology. This project will ignite the beginning of the academic career that I envision and will perpetually cultivate through-out my practice. **I greatly appreciate the opportunity to apply for the prestigious and generous AUGS Foundation Fellow Research Award, as it will provide me with the funding and resources to build an outstanding research foundation that will launch my development into an independent investigator dedicated to improving the care of millions of women suffering from pelvic floor disorders.**

Candidate Information – Candidate 2

Through my undergraduate studies in Biomedical Engineering, I discovered my passion for science and the application of physics and biology to pathological disorders. My research experience began in a vascular surgery lab where I learned many molecular biology techniques to study abdominal aortic aneurysms in a mouse model. During medical school and residency, I participated in clinical research where I designed, implemented, and presented my project at a national meeting prior to publishing in a peer-reviewed journal. Accordingly, I am now seeking the opportunity to integrate my engineering background with ongoing research, and I have developed a keen interest in investigations of permanent mesh. My short term goals in seeking an AUGS Research Grant are to further develop my research skills and to acquire the necessary training and knowledge to direct a basic science research project. My long term goal is to become a leader in translational research defining mechanisms for mesh complications and developing better biomaterials for prolapse repair. A critical factor in developing my research skills is dedicated mentorship. I am fortunate to have enthusiastic and experienced faculty who support and cultivate a collaborative environment for developing research ideas into feasible projects. My primary mentors are Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED]. Dr. [REDACTED] is an active clinician-scientist who is the Director of Research for our Division of Urogynecology and a K12 scholar who has protected research time to dedicate to fellows. Dr. [REDACTED], Director of Basic Science Research for [REDACTED] is a prolific researcher and has extensive experience with rodent models. Dr. [REDACTED], brings a valuable basic science research background and is actively involved in research on uterine fibroids, which is also a fibrotic disease characterized by excessive disorganized extracellular matrix. I am fortunate to have this experienced team of mentors as well as protected research time as a fellow. I also have access to multiple state-of-the-art core research facilities at [REDACTED] including the Pathology Research Histology Laboratory and the Light Microscopy Core Facility. I will learn valuable techniques important to my training to become an independent investigator by using these core facilities.

Planned didactic coursework is another part of my plan to achieve independence as an investigator. I will pursue coursework specifically designed to provide education and training for the proposed research and for future research as well. My planned coursework is as follows:

- Introduction to Immunology in Clinical Research: Fundamental concepts of immunology and its role in human disease and review of immune diagnostic and therapeutic strategies as they are applied to human disease.
- Molecular Biology Techniques Workshop: Four day hands-on and didactic seminar on molecular biology techniques. Techniques covered include polymerase chain reaction (PCR), Western blotting, nucleic acid isolation, protein expression, and siRNA among others.

In addition to didactic coursework and mentoring, I will gain further training through structured conferences and national meetings. I will provide ongoing progress of my research in two forums, the Division of Urogynecology Monthly Research Meetings and the [REDACTED] Research Consortium meetings, a collaborative meeting of urologists, urogynecologists, neurophysiologists, biomedical engineers, and basic science researchers. In both venues, I will receive constructive criticism/feedback as well as ideas on troubleshooting problems that may present during the project. I will also be able to present unpublished data and presentations. Finally, I also plan to attend annual AUGS meetings which provide a venue for networking, professional development, and presentation of my research.

I am committed to life-long learning and becoming a clinician-scientist and academic leader in our field. This project will provide a foundation for me from which the skills and knowledge acquired will help propel me to future grant funding. I appreciate the opportunity to apply for a prestigious AUGS Research Grant as this is an exciting step to becoming a clinician-scientist who will make substantive contributions to the field of FPMRS improving the lives of women who suffer from pelvic floor disorders.