



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee November 2024 Report

Min Kang, Pharm.D., Co-Chair
Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee

Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee

Mission:

The Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee advises the Oversight Committee and staff on universities' special needs and challenges in ***developing cancer research capacity*** in locations far away from the cancer research centers in the major metropolitan areas.



Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee

- GDAC was formed in the summer of 2021.
- We held monthly meetings for first year.
- We shifted to quarterly meetings in mid-2022.
- We have had two meetings since we last presented to Oversight Committee last February; one in April and one in November. We also held a Symposium in June.



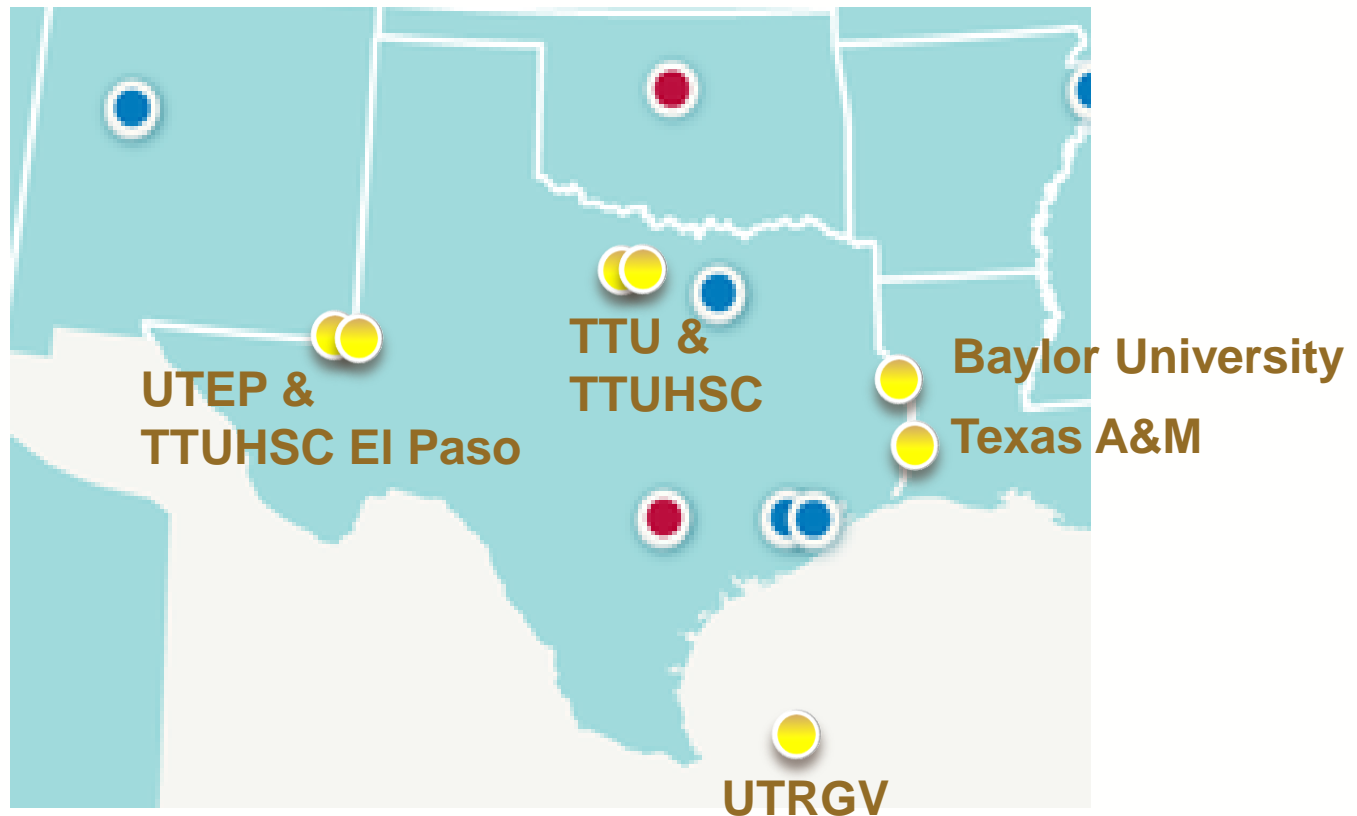
Geographic Diversity Advisory Committee

Member	University
Joseph Heppert, Ph.D.	Texas Tech University
Min Kang, Pharm.D.	Texas Tech University Health Science Center
Robert Kirken, Ph.D.	The University of Texas El Paso
Raj Lakshmanaswamy, Ph.D.	Texas Tech University Health Science Center, El Paso
Ken Ramos, M.D., Ph.D.	Texas A&M University
Daniel Romo, Ph.D.	Baylor University
Sarah Williams-Blangero, Ph.D.	The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley



GDAC member institutions

TREC: The members represent universities that are located 100 miles or more from a National Cancer Institute Designated Cancer Center in Houston, Dallas, or San Antonio.



Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer Award

- TREC Awards continue to be highly successful at building capacity in cancer research across the state of Texas.
- GDAC has worked with CPRIT to expand funding opportunities targeted towards TREC-eligible institutions.
- The new funding opportunities are fostering rapid expansion of cancer research at TREC-eligible institutions.



TREC Academic Research Award as of Aug 2024

Funding Mechanism	No. of Awards	CPRIT investment	No. of Patents filed	No. of Publications
TREC awards	14	\$34.62M	5	48
*Follow-on-funds: \$13.73M				

- 1st TREC funding opportunity announced (Aug 2020) and funded 2 projects
 - Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer award: \$6M over 5 years
Recipients: UTEP and TTUHSC (Lubbock)
- 2nd TREC funding opportunities announced (Sep 2021) and funded 3 projects
 - Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer award: \$6M over 5 years
Recipients: UTRGV, TTUHSC (El Paso), Texas A&M
- 3rd TREC funding opportunities announced (Jan 2023) and funded 8 projects
 - TREC: Institutional Postdoctoral Training Award: \$850,000 over 3 yrs
Recipients: UTEP
 - TREC: Major Instrument Award: \$1M over 2 years
Recipients: TTUHSC (Lubbock), Texas A&M, Baylor University
 - TREC: Pilot Study Award: \$200,000 over 2 years
Recipients: UTRGV, TTUHSC (Lubbock), Texas A&M, TTUHSC (El Paso)



Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer Awards

- University of Texas at El Paso. *Center for the Study of Hispanic Cancer Disparities.*
- Texas Tech Health Sciences Center. *Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer Developmental Therapeutics Center.*
- Texas A&M University System Health Science Center. *Gene-Environment-Lifestyle Interactions in Cancer.*
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso. *Impacting Cancer Outcomes in Hispanics.*
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. *South Texas Center of Excellence in Cancer Research.*



TREC virtual symposium

- 1st TREC Virtual Symposium: June 21, 2024.
- Purpose: to present research and promote collaboration among TREC institutions.
- Two to three presentations from each of the TREC-eligible institutions highlighted the breadth of cancer research being conducted at these institutions.
- Also, the meeting demonstrated what a huge impact CPRIT is having on science at these institutions.

Thank you!





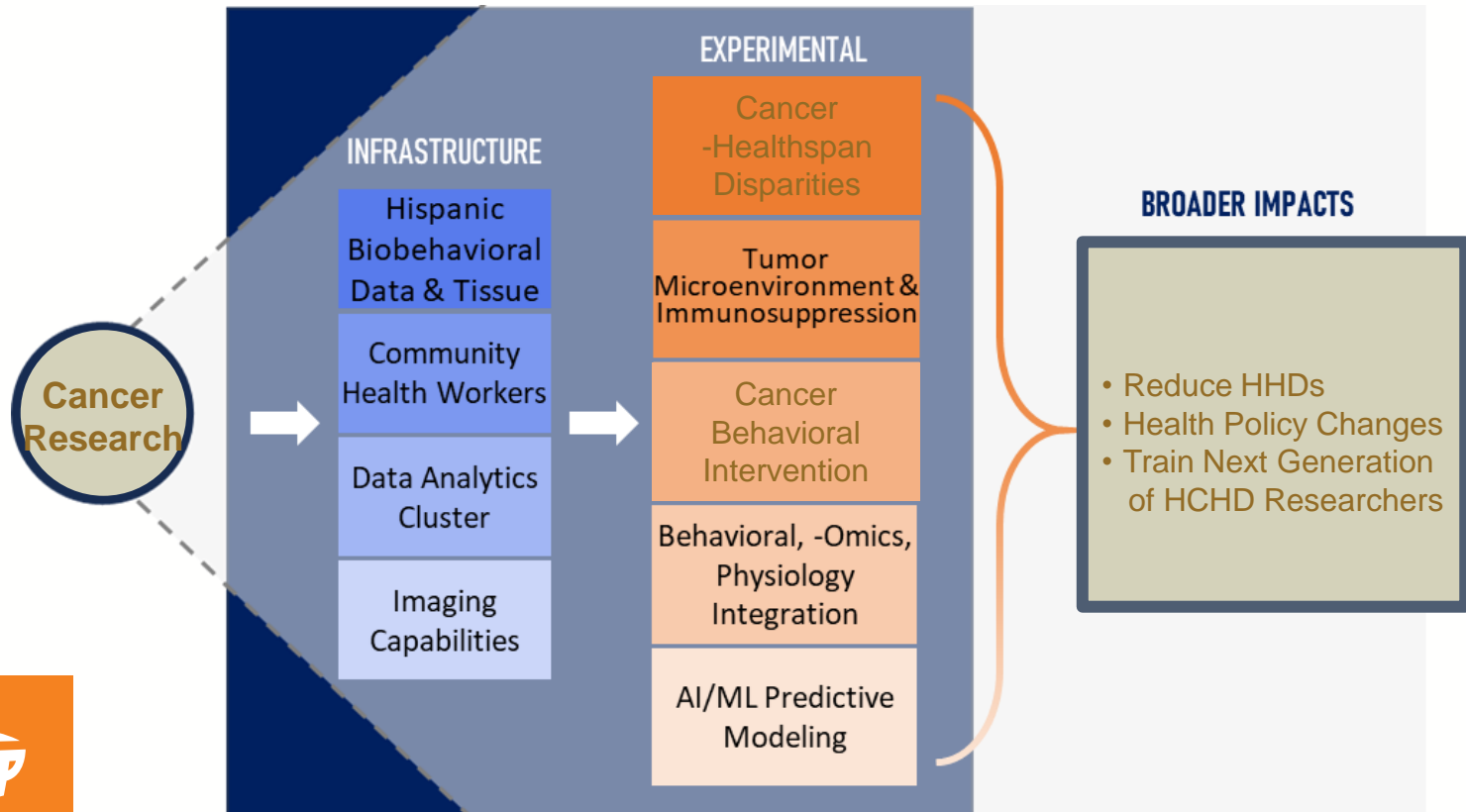
The University of Texas at El Paso

CPRIT GDAC Meeting
November 2024



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UTEP's Hispanic Cancer Health Disparities Strategy



Funds Awarded to UTEP's CRPIT ESIs

	NIH (PI)	NIH (co-I)	*Other (PI)	*Other (co-I)	Total
2021-2022	11	7	12	8	38
2022-2023	8	3	20	10	41

*External funding excluding NIH **PI at Naval Research Laboratory, DC

UTEP/UTMDACC Partnership for Hispanic Cancer Disparities Research
CPRIT-Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer Award (TREC), 2021-2026
PI: Marc Cox
\$5.8M

Goal: Collaborate with UT MD Anderson Cancer Center to provide mentoring to 5 ESI cancer researchers and recruit 2 more faculty to UTEP as part of establishing the Center for Hispanic Cancer Disparities.

Postdoctoral Training Program (PDTP)
CPRIT 2023-2026
PIs: Drs. Weiqin Lu & Anita Quintana
\$0.85M

Goal: Develop a postdoctoral training program by recruiting individuals from underrepresented groups and train them to be the next generation of leaders in cancer research.

Funds Awarded to CRPIT ESIs

	NIH	*Other	Total
2021-2022	\$3,463,097	\$238,827	\$3,701,924
2022-2023	\$403,018	\$680,672	\$1,083,590

Recruited Faculty

Weiqin Lu	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Pancreatic Cancer
Anna Eiring	Biological Sciences	Myeloid Leukemia

CPRIT PDTP Recruited 3 Postdocs as of Nov-2024:

	Name	Area	Previous Institution
1	Md Zahirul Islam	Cancer bioinformatics	UTEP
2	Zahid Rafiq	Pancreatic Cancer	UT MDACC
3	Fabian Romero	Cancer therapeutics	U. Colorado Anschutz



TTUHSC SOM Cancer Center

- 30 members across multiple clinical and basic science departments
- \$36 million in active peer-reviewed external grant funding
- \$3 million in new external grant funding in 2023
- \$80 million in external grant funding over the 16-yr life of the Center
- Multiple resource laboratories that support regional and national clinical trials
- From 2014 to 2024, the Cancer Center has banked specimens consented for research from > 6000 adults and children with cancer



TTUHSC TREC

- Funded September 2021
- Cores supported:
 - Administrative Core
 - Flow Cytometry Core
 - South Plains Oncology Consortium
 - Cancer Biobanking Core
 - Pharmacokinetics Core
 - Regulatory Science Core
 - Biostatistics/Bioinformatics Core
- External Advisory Council:
 - Julia Glade-Bender, MD Vice Chair of Pediatrics, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
 - Michael Hogarty, MD Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
 - Gail Eckhardt, MD Associate Dean of Experimental Therapeutics, Baylor College of Med.
 - Jerry Shay, PhD Associate Director, Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, UTSW



TTUHSC TREC Junior Faculty Accomplishments

- First TREC “graduate”: **Yangzom Bhutia, DVM PhD**, investigates a novel drug target for pancreatic cancer. Received a 5-year, \$1.5 million NCI RO1 grant, June 2023.
- First TREC faculty recruit: **Nighat Noureen, PhD**, Recruited Spring 2023, cancer bioinformatics, co-investigator on a NCI \$1.5 million, 5-year clinical trial support grant awarded fall 2024.
- Second TREC faculty recruit: **Balakrishna Koneru, PhD**, summer 2023, novel drug targets for osteosarcoma.
- **Erin Barr, MD**, pediatric oncologist named chair of national COG first-in-child clinical trial of ATM kinase inhibitor.



CPRIT- Funded Core Labs at TTUHSC

- **Cancer Animal Models Core** (Director: Scott Trasti, DVM)
 - Provides a robust facility for growing human cancers in immunocompromised mice. This core supports the COG Childhood Cancer Repository and the TTUHSC TREC biobanking work with adult cancers.
- **West Texas Pharmacology Core** (Director: Min Kang, PharmD)
 - Provides pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamic support for both preclinical and clinical studies, including GLP pharmacokinetics.
- **Telomere Maintenance Mechanism Lab** (Director: Pat Reynolds, MD PhD)
 - Carries out molecular assays that are biomarkers needed for assessing prognosis and understanding results of multiple COG national phase III clinical trials.
- **Flow Cytometry Core** (Director: Min Kang, PharmD)
 - BD flow cytometry analyzer and a BD cell sorter that supports a COG national phase III clinical trial by analyzing binding of a therapeutic antibody as a biomarker of therapy resistance.



CPRIT TREC Junior Faculty Research Leads in the “Impacting Cancer Outcomes in Hispanics” Grant

- Dr. Anna Eiring (PI): R15 and ACS grant
- Dr. Shrikanth Gadad (PI): R16 and ACS grant
- Dr. Ramadevi Subramani Reddy (Site PI) NCI/NSF SPARK Grant and (PI) Coldwell Foundation grant



CPRIT TREC “Impacting Cancer Outcomes in Hispanics” Grant

- Established a tumor biorepository
- Establishing core service facilities in histology, imaging and cytometry



Diversifying Support for TREC-Eligible Institutions (New RFA's)

- Release of RFA: Aug 2024 (due: Dec 10, 2024)
 - TREC: Pilot Study Award (\$200,000 over 2 yrs)
 - TREC: Advancing Innovative Individual Research Award (\$250,000/yr x 3 yrs)
 - TREC: Core Facility Support Award (\$400,000/yr x 5 yrs)



Exploring New TREC Funding Mechanisms And Conference Activity

- TREC-eligible institutions have fewer resources and support for cancer research than major research institutions located near NCI-designated National Cancer Centers.
- Contributing presentations at conferences fosters opportunities for collaboration (that will expand research) and highlight the broad impact of TREC research programs. An example is the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Conference on Health Disparities.



CPRIT Investment in TREC Eligible Institutions

CPRIT funding awarded to TREC-eligible institutions is transformational for those universities, facilitating:

- Expanded research on cancer;
- Growth of the Texas workforce focused on cancer research;
- Inclusion of underserved populations in basic and clinical research; and
- Positive impact on the health of the local population.

