The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center plans to fund one or two Structural Biology Pilot Awards in 2006. The purpose of the awards are to stimulate interdisciplinary structure-based research at UAB that will result in new insights into the molecular basis of cancer, increase NCI/NIH funding levels, and identify molecules that may be translated to the clinic. Because the focus is on interdisciplinary structural science, PIs may be from any discipline as described in the guidelines. Senior investigators are encouraged to apply. Two year awards will be limited to a maximum of $100,000 for a 12-month period beginning May 1, 2006.

Deadline for proposals is Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Application guidelines and instructions are posted on the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center website (Structural Biology Program) at http://www3.ccc.uab.edu.

Additional questions about the Award may be directed to Mark R. Walter (walter@uab.edu).
Comprehensive Cancer Center Structural Biology Pilot Funding Initiative

Deadline for Submission: February 15, 2006

The Comprehensive Cancer Center Structural Biology Program (CCCSBP) requests, from UAB and SRI faculty of any rank, proposals that combine three-dimensional protein structure studies with biological, biophysical, biomechanical, and/or chemical studies that dissect the fundamental mechanisms of cancer. The goal of the proposals is not to simply solve new structures to add to the protein data bank. Rather, the goal is to develop a research plan that combines structural studies with, for example, efforts to develop small molecule or protein agonists/antagonists that may lead to novel cancer therapeutics or experiments that define a novel mechanism of action of the macromolecule under study. The long range goal of this funding mechanism is to stimulate inter-disciplinary structure-based research initiatives at UAB that will reveal new insights into the molecular basis of cancer, result in the external funding via submission of an NCI/NIH proposal, and identify molecules that can be translated to the clinic.

Because the focus of this request is to determine how proteins involved in malignant processes work and might be manipulated for therapies, research proposals may be initiated by any faculty member regardless of their area of expertise or affiliation with the CCCSBP. However, it is expected that all proposals will include:

1. A substantial structural-biology component that uses methods such as X-ray diffraction, NMR spectroscopy, or other structural technique that provides high resolution structural details sufficient to answer the questions addressed in the proposal. Thus, investigators in the biological sciences must partner with a member of the CCCSBP. Any structural biologist not currently a member of the CCCSBP can request membership by submitting a letter and CV to the CCCSBP Director, Mark R. Walter.

2. A biology component that incorporates state-of-the-art in-vitro and/or in-vivo assays that test structure-based hypotheses or evaluate designer small molecules or protein therapeutics. Thus, CCCSBP members must partner/collaborate with an investigator with biological expertise in the area of study.

3. A chemical synthesis, molecular design, or detailed structure-function analysis component. This may require a third collaborator with the appropriate expertise.

The Award-

CCCSBP pilot awards are for two years and limited to a maximum of $100,000 per proposal for a 12 month period from May 1, 2006 to April 30, 2007. Funding in the second year (May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008) is dependent on the submission of a
progress report demonstrating considerable progress and efficient usage of the budgeted funds. Awards will cover only direct costs. The CCCSBP will fund either 1 or 2 awards depending on the amount of funds available and the quality of the applications.

The award will fund research supplies, special services and core fees, animal costs and maintenance, salaries and stipends of technical personnel, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows directly involved in the project, and publication costs. Salaries for principal investigators and co-principal investigators are not allowed. A detailed budget justification should be provided.

The Proposal-

1. Applicants must hold a faculty appointment at the level of Instructor or higher. Established investigators are especially encouraged to apply.

2. Proposals should be written using the revised (09/04) NIH PHS 398 forms for R01 applications (http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/forms.htm) and they must conform to the NIH standards for margin and font size. However, the Research Plan (sections A-D.) describing the specific studies to be supported under the CCCSBP funding mechanism is limited to 10 pages. The proposal should include a detailed plan for the integration of the collaborators/methods.

3. Up to 2 additional pages may be used to describe how the preliminary results obtained from these studies can be used to support the submission of a full (4-5 year) NCI/NIH proposal.

4. Applications should include all NIH front pages including a detailed (first-year) budget and budget justification. The 4 page modular biosketch may be submitted. Sections e. through i. must also be included in the research plan as in the standard NIH application. Proposals that ignore these instructions will be received with low enthusiasm.

5. IACUC and IRB approvals for studies involving human subjects and animal use need not be obtained prior to submission, but must be approved prior to activation of the award.

6. On the front page of the application, a department chair’s signature must be included on line 16. The signature of the department chair substitutes for the “official signing for the applicant institution”. Investigators should designate only one investigator as the principal investigator and obtain the signature of that investigator’s chair.

7. Conflict of interest forms must be submitted.
Off-campus collaborators-

Off-campus collaborators may be included for components 2 and 3 of the proposal. However, the research efforts of off-campus investigators may not be supported by this funding mechanism. Thus, off-campus collaborators must provide a letter documenting an outside scientific and financial commitment to the project. This letter must be cosigned by their chairman. It is permissible for personnel paid through this funding mechanism to spend time at another research institute to further the goals of the project. Despite the off-campus collaborations, it is expected that the PI will use the data obtained under this mechanism of support to apply for an NCI/NIH grant through UAB.

Expectations of awardees-

Investigators funded by the CCCSPB will be expected to present the results of their research in the Cancer Center Seminar Series and to submit a research proposal through UAB that is competitive for external funding through NCI or NIH.

Important dates and proposal review-

1. Submit the original application and 12 copies to Ms. Susan Parker in Room 2560 by 3:00 pm, Friday, February 15, 2006. Please secure copies with binder clips: do not staple.

2. Applications will be reviewed in March-April 2006 by a committee consisting of Cancer Center and Departmental representatives and ranked on the basis of scientific merit and relevance to the goals of the CCCSPB.

3. Awards will be activated May 1, 2006 pending IRB and IACUC approval as appropriate.

4. For questions regarding the Program or application process, please contact Mark R. Walter, walter@uab.edu, 4-9279.