FSU and UF partner, receive CTSA grant to research community health

Casey Chapter
Deputy News Editor

Florida State University, partnered with the University of Florida, received a grant of $29 million which will be used to further develop community-based health research.

The grant, which is called the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA), will allow FSU and UF to share resources and tackle issues such as mental health, maternal health, and child stress. The goal is to come up with solutions to the primary health issues facing the community.

"For the first time we have an award that is integrating efforts across eight colleges at Florida State University, what we consider to be our virtual health science campus," said Dr. Jeffrey Joyce, the senior associate dean for research and graduate programs at the College of Medicine. "The intent is to develop community-based research that will support the health outcomes of our communities."

As both FSU and UF have resources each other could benefit from, the grant encourages collaboration for more efficient and effective research in multiple health fields. For example, the College of Communication will focus on developing tools for Alzheimer's patients and the College of Human Sciences may focus on health solutions for expecting mothers.

This is the second time Florida State has been a part of such a partnership. Previously, only the College of Medicine was involved in health research. But with the help of other colleges on campus, the analysis will be diversified to include multiple perspectives and possibly create innovative solutions to health issues facing the community.

"Not only for the College of Medicine

Dr. Jeffrey Joyce (right) is the senior associate dean for research in FSU's College of Medicine. CASEY CHAPTER/FSVIEW

but for all [the other] seven of the colleges involved, we're going to have a lot more collaboration and a lot more people working together to solve translational research problems and bring some of the research to the community," said grant writing specialist Terra Bradley. "So it's good for the College of Medicine, but it's better for the whole university."

The collaborators involved in the research within FSU's colleges each have a specialized focus, making up a team that stretches across campus.

Members include representatives from the College of Social Work, the College of Nursing, the College of Human Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Communication and Information, the College of Education, the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy and the College of Medicine.

Dr. Joyce said he hopes communication between colleges will lead to a campus-wide benefit from the research.

"This requires real support from all of the deans of all the colleges, the provost, the vice president for research," Joyce said. "This is a true, very much integrated FSU effort, not just a College of Medicine effort."

Some other initiatives of the partnership are to expand collaboration with Florida's historically black colleges and universities to provide more diversity within the field of research and to develop further training opportunities within the fields of informatics, research methods and community engagement.

"That requires translation from the bench, or from patients, all the way into how we impact social science policy, health policy, mental health, children and stress, maternal health, the whole gamut of our needs within the Big Bend and the Panhandle community," Joyce said.

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Aleycia Ballantyne, a junior majoring in political science and a transfer student from Mercer University in Macon, GA transferred to FSU because of the cost of attendance and small population of Mercer, but found that even though FSU may have a lot of students there was not a sense of community within it.

"I joined TSU because I did not expect such a huge campus to have no sense of community," said Ballantyne. "Being a part of TSU, I am directly with my peers and it allows me to interact more with people who are experiencing the same thing as me."