Call for Applications: August M. Watanabe Translational Scholar Award

Background: The Watanabe Prize for Translational Research, and the selection of two Watanabe Translational Scholars will be presented this year by the IU School of Medicine. The awards are named after the late August M. Watanabe, an IU School of Medicine alumnus whose illustrious career spanned academia and the pharmaceutical and life science industries.

The 2018 Watanabe Prize for Translational Research has been awarded to Jean Bennett, MD, PhD, who is currently the F.M. Kirby Professor of Molecular Ophthalmology (with a joint appointment in the Ophthalmology and Cell & Developmental Biology Departments) and the Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Ophthalmology, Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also the Director of the Center for Advanced Retinal and Ophthalmic Therapeutics (CAROT) in the Perelman School of Medicine. Dr. Bennett’s research interests include the molecular genetics of retinal degenerations and gene therapy-mediated treatment of ocular disease. Dr. Bennett’s pioneering translational research in the field of ocular gene therapy has paved the way for the first US FDA approval of gene therapy for a genetic disease. This approval was granted in December 2017 for a rare kind of hereditary blindness. This is also the first approved treatment for a hereditary blindness worldwide.

Dr. Bennett has received a number of honors and awards throughout her career. Recent awards include the 2011 Retina Research Foundation Pyron Award for Outstanding Achievement in Retina Research, the 2011 NIH Directors Pioneer Award (NIH research grant), the 2012 Alfred W. Bressler Prize in Vision Science, the 2013 Clinical Research Forum Distinguished Clinical Research Achievement Award (the second highest award given in the CRF’s Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Awards), the 2016 Germination Project Award, and the 2017 New Innovation Award from the National Medical Association. She was elected to the Association of American Physicians in 2006, the National Academy of Medicine (formerly Institute of Medicine) in 2008, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2015.

We are currently accepting applications for two Watanabe Translational Scholar Awards. The two selected scholars hold the Watanabe Scholar title for two years, present on their work during the annual Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences meeting in Indianapolis (Friday, September 14, 2018), and under the program will benefit from the mentorship of Jean Bennett, MD, PhD. In addition, scholars receive $5,000 for travel and mentor meetings.

Eligibility: Indiana University School of Medicine junior faculty member, who holds an Assistant Professor, Tenure Track position and is focused on conducting translational research.

Application Process: Please follow the WEBCamp link to apply Watanabe Scholar Award Link or use the Start a Submission link found here CTSI Watanabe RFA
Please contact Patricia McGuire at pcmcguir@iu.edu with any questions.

- Applicant’s Name, Title, and Contact Information
- Applicant’s CV
- Statement of Interest: A one-page statement summarizing: (a) the applicant’s current program of research, and (b) how informal mentoring from Dr. Jean Bennett will help advance the applicant’s program of research.

Applications are due by midnight July 23, 2018.
Applicants will be notified of a decision by August 3, 2018.