

To: All Faculty Members  
From: Katherine L. Nathanson, MD  
Chair, PSOM Limited Applications Selection Committee  
Subject: FY25 Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Award Program  
<http://ritaallen.org/scholars/>

The University has been invited to submit one nomination for the 2025 Rita Allen Foundation (RAF) Scholars Award Program. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) is coordinating the final applicant review and selection process. Each school within the University may submit one nomination to OVPR.

**Program Summary:**

The RAF Scholars program funds basic biomedical research in the fields of **cancer, immunology, and neuroscience**. The Program supports research scientists in the early stages of their careers and aims to advance transformative ideas and leverage them to promote breakthrough solutions.

The Foundation seeks research projects with above-average risk that challenge the status quo. This award encourages innovative, cutting-edge research with above-average risk and groundbreaking possibilities. RAF Scholars are distinguished by their bold approaches to basic scientific questions that address problems of global concern, as well as their potential for learning, leadership, and collaboration.

**Eligibility:**

*Note: The Rita Allen Foundation encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds that are underrepresented in the biomedical research field.*

- Candidates must have completed their training and provided persuasive evidence of distinguished achievement or extraordinary promise in research in one of the relevant fields (cancer, immunology, or neuroscience).
- United States citizenship is not a requirement; however, awardees must be legally employed at the time of application at a U.S. degree-granting or research institution that is an invited participant in the Rita Allen Foundation Scholars Program.
- Candidates should be independent investigators in the early stages of their careers and research.
- Candidates must be Assistant Professors; the most competitive candidates will be within the first three years of an appointment on the tenure track. (This is taken into consideration in the rating of applications by the Scientific Advisory Committee.)
- Candidates must have received committed startup funds from their respective institutions.
- Candidates must have lab space from their institutions.
- For any sponsored research projects, the applicant must be eligible to serve as Principal Investigator for the project, unless otherwise noted in the LSO. Please see [Penn's PI Eligibility requirements](#) to ensure you are eligible.
- *Note: Candidates nominated by the University in previous years should not be re-nominated. A previous PSOM candidate not selected by the University may reapply for consideration again through the internal PSOM review process.*

**Award Amount:**

- An unrestricted research award of \$110,000 per year for a maximum of five years.
- Entire grant is for direct project expenses, including up to 50% of the Scholar's compensation.
- No overhead is provided.

**Note:** Rita Allen Foundation Scholars may not accept an award from the Beckman Young Investigator Program, Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences, Searle Scholars Program, or Vallee Scholars Program that would take effect beginning in year one of the RAF award. Rita Allen Scholars may apply for awards from these organizations that would take effect beginning in year two of the RAF award. Other sources of funding also may influence selection.

For FAQ and a list of all previous Scholars please go to the following link: <http://ritaallen.org/scholars/>

**PSOM Limited Applications Committee Review and Selection Process:**

Candidates must submit the following in their application:

- Cover page with nominee's name, department, telephone number, address, e-mail address, date of appointment to tenure track position, confirmation of institutional start-up funds and lab space, and title of proposal.
- Research proposal (no longer than two pages, references not included in two page limit) describing the proposed research in the areas of cancer, neuroscience, or immunology. The proposal should include how the award would enable the candidate to pursue new ideas and take strategic risks, and an explanation of how this proposal differs from or relates to the candidate's other supported projects
- CV or biosketch, including current, past, and pending funding, **with award amounts** (direct dollars per year).

Submission should be in a single pdf file in the following order: cover page, research proposal, CV or biosketch. The pdf document should be titled as follows: RAF\_\_InvestigatorSurname\_Investigator first name. For example: RAF\_Doe\_Jane.pdf.

Proposals must be submitted to **Kaitlyn Hagarty** at [kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine@upenn.edu](mailto:kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine@upenn.edu) by **9:00am on Thursday, August 8th.**

Questions can be directed to Kaitlyn Hagarty at [kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine@upenn.edu](mailto:kaitlyn.hagarty@pennmedicine@upenn.edu).