

Dear Colleagues --

It is our great pleasure to inform you that our National Institute on Aging (NIA) P30 renewal application for the Population Aging Research Center (PARC) at the University of Pennsylvania was successful.

PARC has 25 years of experience with creating the right setting for interdisciplinary research on the demography and economics of aging that fundamentally advances science and the policy-related evidence-base, including a focus on diverse and often underrepresented populations domestically and globally. With continued NIA funding, PARC will be able to continue its important mission of fostering aging research at Penn for the next five years.

PARC has launched a new chapter in its proud history, the cornerstone of which is PARC's new institutional foundation pillared in both the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM). Within this new cross-school structure, Demography and Economics provide the disciplinary foundations around which PARC proposes to coalesce an aging research agenda that is innovative and multidisciplinary, domestic and global, theory-based and deeply rooted in a life-course understanding of health and aging processes. This new and expanded vision is reflected in a new leadership team, with Hans-Peter Kohler (Sociology, SAS) and Norma Coe (Medical Ethics and Health Policy, PSOM) serving as Multi-PIs of PARC and the NIA P30 grant. The aim of which is ambitious in its breadth, ranging from basic science to applied policy-relevant studies, and comprehensive in encompassing an expanded scope of NIA priority topics including health disparities to ADRD, family change to long-term care, and the relevance of early-life conditions to global aging

We are planning to kick-off PARC activities during this new grant cycle with "listening sessions" to give you a chance to provide us with input on what you need and want from PARC. In addition, we will host a workshop on "COVID-19, Aging and Aging Research" later in the year.

The foci of PARC's research activities are concentrated in five Research Themes, two of which are new, to reflect the evolving NIA and PARC priorities as well as the domestic and global needs for research evidence to inform policy-responses to population aging.

New PARC Themes:

- a) Health Care and Long-Term Care in Older Adults: investigations of the strain that aging societies place on the health care system, both acute care and long-term services and support (LTSS), how to best meet the needs of older and disabled adults, how to measure and finance the medical burden of aging societies.
- b) Cognition and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD): examinations of the precursors of cognitive decline and the effects of cognitive decline, including ADRD, on patients, caregivers, and health care systems, domestically and around the globe.

Continued PARC Themes:

- c) Health Disparities in Aging: analyses of socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, nativity, geographic, and gender inequalities in health and mortality, including period/cohort risks and their underlying social/biological causes.
- d) Early Life-Conditions and Older Adult Health, Behavior and Well-Being: explorations of early developmental circumstances that may be crucial for shaping how we age, including nutrition, infectious disease, social support, education, and gene-environment interactions prenatally and during childhood.

e) Global Aging and Health: studies of sociocultural, economic, and environmental circumstances impacting the well-being of older individuals around the world, and analyses of physical, mental and cognitive aging trajectories in diverse and understudied populations across a wide spectrum of socioeconomic development.

More broadly, our aims and ambitions for PARC for the next five years include:

- 1) Provide administrative, technical, and infrastructure support to PARC Research Associates and Affiliates for the production and dissemination of high-quality population-based research on the life-course as it relates to the process of aging, and to facilitate a productive, synergistic, and intellectual dialogue among and between PARC Associates and other researchers at Penn and other institutions.
- 2) Encourage transformative research through innovation and nurturing cross-disciplinary collaborations by targeting the development of junior faculty towards careers in population aging, and promoting and facilitating long-term careers for participating research scientists.
- 3) Extend and exploit PARC's strong scientific and professional domestic and international population engagement through PARC's Research Networks that share cross-cutting interests with PARC's Research Themes, and use the intersection of PARC Networks and Themes as a nexus for identifying and facilitating innovative and interdisciplinary aging research opportunities.
- 4) Ensure PARC's continued central position at the research frontier of data-driven research on the demography and economics of aging, by (i) expanding PARC's research networks and primary data collection efforts; (ii) leveraging the new SAS-PSOM partnership to gain access to unprecedented amounts of secondary data; and (iii) strategically cultivating new data resources that will enhance the research potential of PARC Associates and members of PARC's Research Networks for path-breaking research.
- 5) Extend PARC's scientific reach and impact through a comprehensive dissemination strategy, from pilot to peer-review publication. These efforts include (i) training PARC Associates on dissemination, how to reach academic audiences outside their primary field, and policy implications of their work; (ii) curating population-aging interested audiences from outside of academia; and (iii) production and dissemination of non-academic publications (issue briefs).

We are excited to lead PARC during these next five years, and we are thankful to be able to work with an impressive group of PARC Associates across many of Penn's Schools and Centers. We are grateful for your support of our NIA P30 application, and for the support by SAS and PSOM Dean's Offices for this new vision for PARC. We are of course building on a foundation of PARC research and networks that were developed by Irma Elo, and before Sam Preston, Beth Soldo and Claudia Valeggia. The new vision for PARC would not have been possible without the dedication and efforts by those who led PARC before us.

Please have a socially distant toast on the successful renewal of the NIA PARC P30 funding. Stay tuned for further updates and PARC activities, including our fall workshop on "COVID-19, Aging and Aging Research." We look forward to working with you in the next five years, and seeing you -- virtually or physically on Penn's campus -- very soon.

Best,
Hans-Peter Kohler & Norma B. Coe

