

RTI University Scholars Program

Information for Applicants: 2021–2022 Academic Year

RTI University Scholars Drs. Shu Wen Ng and Will Vizuete (UNC-Chapel Hill) speaking with Dr. Tony Hickey (RTI)

RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Since 2014, the [RTI University Scholars Program](#) has provided partial financial support for distinguished academic researchers to spend scholarly leave time at RTI to actively collaborate with our experts. The program's goals are to foster collaboration, build scientific stature, and catalyze opportunities for future externally funded, joint projects.

With the launch of the RTI Racial Justice and Transformative Research Initiative, the RTI University Scholars Program will prioritize applications for the 2021–2022 academic year from tenured or research-track faculty members at the Associate Professor level or higher with a commitment to collaboration and a research project related to racial equity and policy, broadly construed. RTI's vision for achieving racial equity is to lead with compassion, execute with science, and transform by sharing what we learn.

The RTI University Scholars Program is open to faculty from Duke University and the University of North Carolina's 16 university campuses.

RTI especially encourages researchers from traditionally underrepresented groups to apply.

Key Dates for the 2021–2022 Application Cycle

Monday November 16, 2020	Call for applications released
Sunday January 31, 2021 by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)	Expression of interest submission deadline
Friday February 12, 2021	Notification to all applicants
Monday April 5, 2021 by 11:59 p.m. ET	Full proposal submission deadline for invited applicants
April 2021	Notification to applicants who submitted full proposals

*The period of performance may begin as early as **September 2021**.*

Support

The RTI University Scholars Program covers half of each selected scholar's salary and fringe, as well as other direct costs (ODCs)—including supplies and publication costs—up to \$5,000. ODCs that exceed this amount will be reviewed for approval by the RTI collaborator's host unit. Furthermore, requests for additional RTI internal support must be reviewed and approved by the RTI collaborator's leadership because this would be the responsibility of their unit.

Note that RTI does not cover Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs, and the RTI University Scholars Program will not cover graduate student stipends or tuition costs; however, students may participate in the [RTI Internship Program](#).

Process

Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted as a PDF via the [RTI University Scholars Program Application Portal](#) no later than **11:59 p.m. ET on Sunday, January 31, 2021**. To be fully considered, the EOI must contain the following elements:

1. A **two-page description** about the proposed collaborative research project, including
 - a. Proposed project title
 - b. Name and title of RTI collaborator(s)
 - c. Proposed duration of the residency
 - d. Proposed project's relevance to racial equity and policy that leverages RTI's [practice area\(s\)](#) and/or [services and capabilities](#), purpose, objectives, activities, deliverables, and expected results
 - e. Specific sources of external funding that will be targeted for future proposals.
2. A **letter of support** from the applicant's department chair
3. The applicant's **curriculum vitae** (no limit on length), including experience securing funding as a principal investigator (PI) or co-PI.

The EOI does not have a budget requirement.

Business and research leaders will review and rank EOIs, with the University Collaboration Office (UCO) providing guidance and oversight of the review process. EOIs will be selected based on the following criteria related to intellectual merit, project fit, and feasibility of the proposed activity:

- Impact of the proposed research program on the advancement of racial equity, broadly defined
- Qualifications and track record of the applicant
- Degree to which the proposed research project advances scientific stature

- Alignment to RTI's practice areas and/or services and capabilities
- Evidence that the proposed research could attract large-scale research support by government agencies, corporations, industrial consortia, or foundations.
- Likelihood that the proposed research project will be successful.

Invited Full Proposals

Applicants will be notified by **Friday, February 12, 2021**, about whether they will be invited to submit a full proposal.

If invited, full proposals must be submitted via the [RTI University Scholars Program Application Portal](#) no later than **11:59 p.m. ET on Monday, April 5, 2021**.

Full Proposal Content and Organization

Full proposals must be organized as follows:

1. **Proposal Cover Page (online form):** Please complete the online form, Step 1: Your Information, of the RTI University Scholars Program Application Portal. Include the following information on the form:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Proposed period of performance (start/end dates) and total months
 - c. Contact information for the applicant, university administrators, and RTI collaborator
 - d. RTI practice area(s) and/or services and capabilities to which the project aligns
 - e. Synopsis (200 words maximum) of the proposed research project that is appropriate for a broad faculty readership.
2. **Budget (online template):** Please complete the online template, *Step 2: Budget Proposal*, with justifications for specific expenditures, if necessary.

Note that RTI does not cover F&A costs, and the RTI University Scholars Program will not cover graduate student stipends or tuition costs; however, students may participate in the RTI Internship Program.

Items 3–4 must be consolidated into one PDF that is uploaded via the RTI University Scholars Program Application Portal.

3. Project Description (up to eight single-spaced pages):

The project description must clearly outline the scope, objectives, and measurable deliverables to gauge success throughout the period of performance, as well as the potential for external funding and ongoing collaboration. Additionally, the description should foreground racial equity and policy, and provide the following information:

- a. Identify how the proposed research project aligns with RTI's practice areas and/or services and capabilities
- b. Address an existing research gap
- c. Describe how the project will advance scientific stature.

The project description should also include enough detail such that reviewers can evaluate the proposed activity's appropriateness and feasibility. Please keep in mind that *not all reviewers will be experts* in every proposed field of study; therefore, project descriptions should be written for a broad audience.

4. Letter of Support from RTI Collaborator(s):

The letter should

- a. Endorse the applicant and project
- b. Describe the nature of the relationship (new or existing)
- c. Identify the domain area and field contributions
- d. Highlight the potential for scientific stature.

Full Proposal Evaluation

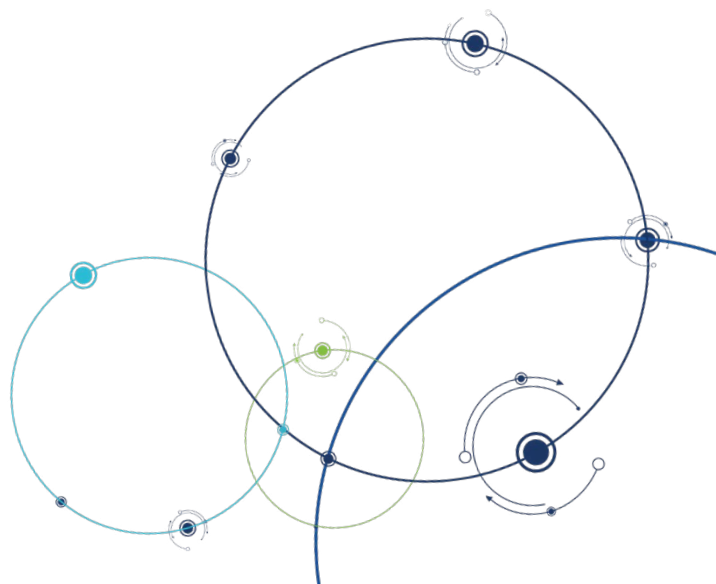
RTI leaders will review and rank full proposals. The UCO will provide guidance and oversight during the review process. Full proposal rankings will be based on the following criteria related to intellectual merit, project fit, and feasibility of the proposed activity:

- Impact of the proposed research program on the advancement of racial equity, broadly defined
- Qualifications and track record of the applicant
- Degree to which the proposed research project advances scientific stature.
- Alignment to RTI's practice areas and/or services and capabilities
- Synergy among the applicant and the RTI collaborator(s) to enable research of a scope and complexity commensurate with the scale of RTI University Scholars Program support.
- Evidence that the proposed research could attract large-scale research support by government agencies, corporations, industrial consortia, or foundations.
- Clear description and feasibility of the deliverables and metrics
- Reasonableness of the budget
- Likelihood for long-term sustainability of the research project via extramural funding.

Applicants who submitted full proposals will be notified about the status of their application in **April 2021**.

More Information

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www.rti.org

RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Clients rely on us to answer questions that demand an objective and multidisciplinary approach—one that integrates expertise across the social and laboratory sciences, engineering, and international development. We believe in the promise of science, and we are inspired every day to deliver on that promise for the good of people, communities, and businesses around the world. For more information, visit www.rti.org.

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