

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Research Agreement between the University of Michigan and The Hope Foundation

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects while reviewing the Proposal Approval Form which then triggered a review by the Medical School Conflict of Interest Board. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest was then developed and approved by the Board and agreed to by the parties involved.

This proposed research agreement (“Agreement”) falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professor James Rae is an employee of the University of Michigan (“University”), and Secretary of the Board of Directors for The Hope Foundation. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the Board of Regents (“Regents”) of the University of Michigan and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote.

Background:

James Rae, PhD, a Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, is the Secretary of the Board of Directors for a non-profit foundation called The Hope Foundation (the “Company”). The Company wishes to fund a project entitled “Biomarker discovery for head & neck cancer using scRNA-seq” (ORSP# 19-PAF01618) in the Department of Internal Medicine under the direction of Dr. Paul Swiecicki. The purpose of this project is to test if single cell RNA sequencing can be used to discover biomarkers for head and neck cancer (HNC) that, when combined with existing targets in a core immune-oncology imaging mass cytometry (IMC) panel, will result in a scalable and easily adaptable metastatic HNC-specific immune microenvironment assay enabling rapid assessment of tumor specimens for personalized therapy.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the Agreement conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is approximately one (1) year. The amount of funding support will not exceed \$23,878. Since research projects are often amended, this agreement includes a provision for changes in time and scope. University procedures for approval of these changes will be followed and additional conflict of interest review will be done as appropriate.

Impact of the Agreement:

The Agreement will support an effort by Dr. Paul Swiecicki to use his expertise and University laboratory, as well as other University resources, to: 1) guide the design of subsequent research, validating results with an expanded cohort of patient samples, 2) inform potential drug trials for HNC based on identified markers of disrupted signaling in tumor cells and immune cell functions in the tumor microenvironment, and 3) support single cell transcriptomics and IMC in clinical trials as a tool for studying other aggressive cancer subtype.

Recommendations:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the Medical School Conflict of Interest Board. In light of this disclosure and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the University's entering into this Agreement with The Hope Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Hu', is positioned below the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

S. Jack Hu  
Vice President for Research

March 2019