

## CENTERS AND INSTITUTES SELF-STUDY/PROGRAM REVIEW

**Center/Institute:** Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Center

**Director/Administrator:** Jordan K. Aquino, MPH, Lecturer, Department of Health Science

**College/Academic unit:** College of Health and Human Development

**Contact Information:** Office Phone: (657) 278-7031 | Office Location: KHS 106F  
Email: [fmcp@fullerton.edu](mailto:fmcp@fullerton.edu) | Website: <http://fmcp.fullerton.edu>

**Year Established:** 2007

**Year of Last Review:** 2009 – 2010

**Date of Review:** April 18, 2018

**Name of Primary Author(s) if different from the director(s) of the Center/Institute:**

### **Mission and Goals**

Until fall 2017, the mission of the Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Center (FMCPC) was to advance research, education, and professional practice related to fibromyalgia (FM) and other chronic pain disorders. This was based on an integrated approach to symptom management, with the goals of advancing pain-related research, education and professional practice. Following a meeting of FMCPC faculty and staff (fall 2017), this was changed to focus solely on research and education since professional practice has not been a component of Center activities. At the fall meeting, Center goals were evaluated; all were kept except one related to conducting health, fitness, and rehabilitation programs, which has not been a Center focus. The current goals are listed below:

- Conduct interdisciplinary research
- Provide training for students
- Facilitate support and education for persons with FM and other chronic pain conditions, including their significant others
- Offer a variety of physical, health, and mobility assessments
- Raise public awareness about FM and other chronic pain conditions, and its effects on individuals, their families, and significant others

The FMCPC contributes to two of the CSUF 5-year Strategic Plan goals: (1) providing an enhanced co-curricular environment that prepares students for participation in a global society and is responsive to workforce needs and (2) improving the likelihood that students will persist at the university and graduate. It does this through the high-impact practice of student involvement in community engagement activities and all aspects of our ongoing longitudinal study (see activities and accomplishments below). All involvement requires students to work side-by-side with faculty from the various departments, exposing them to new ways of thinking and doing things.

The FMCCPC mission and goals fully support the College of Health & Human Development's (CHHD) mission to provide exemplary education, research, and community outreach related to human health, development, and lifelong well-being.

### **Activities**

**Research:** Over the past three years, the FMCCPC has been engaged in a variety of research activities. One major activity was the completion of waves 3 (fall 2014) and 4 (fall 2016) of its longitudinal study, "*Physical and Cognitive Status of People Aged 50+ with and without Fibromyalgia: A Longitudinal Study, 2008 to Present.*" This study involves researchers and students from several schools and departments on campus, including health science, kinesiology, nursing, biology, gerontology and psychology. Undergraduate and graduate students assist faculty in putting together the IRB application, recruiting participants, training fellow peer research assistants, collecting the data and organizing the data collection, entering the data into statistical packages, and developing workshops, community and professional presentations, and peer-reviewed publications.

A pilot study on acute stress in individuals with FM was also completed (summer/fall 2015) that included undergraduate and graduate students from health science and psychology. This study also provided the same opportunities as the longitudinal study, with the additional component of collecting biospecimens from research participants. This expanded the co-curricular learning experiences for all students involved in the study.

Faculty and staff from the Colleges of Education and Health & Human Development, School of Nursing, and Departments of Health Science, Psychology, Chemistry & Biochemistry developed a research proposal on the benefits of an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction intervention in individuals with FM, which was subsequently unfunded.

Center faculty have continued to mentor and advise graduate student theses and projects, some of which were secondary data analyses from the existing longitudinal study or novel research questions that required students to develop their own instrumentation, recruit participants, and collect and manage their own data.

These myriad of research activities serve all of the FMCCPC mission and goals by engaging members of the FM community and raising awareness about FM through participant engagement and subsequent professional and community presentations/publications.

**Community Engagement:** The FMCCPC supports the local community by hosting monthly support group meetings on campus for people living with fibromyalgia, chronic pain, and fatigue. These meetings consist of professional speakers, roundtable discussions, and a place for people to build a sense of community and validation of their illnesses. The Center has also co-sponsored and co-hosted holiday parties with the support group and the Fibromyalgia Awareness National Network.

Student assistants in the FMCCPC are trained in a variety of administrative, clerical, and operational tasks related to running a non-profit research and education organization including updating the Center's 800+ constituent database. Student assistants continuously reach out to its membership through newsletters and email/phone notices of upcoming research studies and community events.

Faculty and graduate students have also given presentations at the CSUF Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) and local support group meetings.

### **Organizational Structure and Governance**

The FMCCPC has a Center director, research director, director of program development, and community support group leaders (3-4). The Center director oversees all research and community activities and trains all student assistants on daily operational tasks including, but not limited to, phone/email/postal correspondence, constituent database management, website maintenance, and community and university relations. An Advisory Committee consists of

faculty and their graduate students who work with the data generated by the Center. The Advisory Committee meets once every semester to discuss the progress of on-going projects, to develop new projects, and to evaluate opportunities for funding (both intra- and extra-mural).

The Center director and staff meet with the community support group leaders at least once every semester to discuss scheduling of the room, technical assistance, speaking engagements, and any instrumental or programming needs and wants from the community. As previously mentioned, the Center goals were changed during the fall 2017 meeting, to remove one goal related to conducting health, fitness, and rehabilitation programs. Consequently, discussions between the Center director and the director of program development's role and the Center's future programming are ongoing to ensure that the FMCPCC continues to provide robust educational and community programs that meet the mission and goals of the Center.

### **Resources and Sustainability**

The FMCPCC primarily functions from intra- and extra-mural funding, donations, community volunteers, and unpaid student practicums, internships, and volunteers. With a current foundation budget of approximately \$3,000 used for direct costs of Center activities and supplies, the following were sources of intramural funding during the last three years:

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| 2014-2015 | Piazza, J. (Junior/Senior Faculty Research Award, CSUF) <i>Understanding Fibrofog: Examining the link between neuroendocrine activity and cognitive impairment among people with Fibromyalgia</i> . Total Costs: \$8,719            |
| 2014-2015 | Piazza, J. (Incentive Grant, CSUF) <i>Stressor reactivity, sleep and cognitive functioning: Examining associations between people with and without Fibromyalgia</i> . Total Costs: \$10,000   |
| 2015-2016 | Cherry, B. J. (Faculty Enhancement and Instructional Development Award, CSUF). <i>Modeling Blood Pressure and Cognitive Performance in Older Adults</i> . (Release time, 3 WTUs, \$5,000)   |
| 2016-2017 | Aquino, J. K. (Assigned Time for Exceptional Levels of Service to Students Award, CSUF) <i>Physical and Cognitive Status of People Aged 50+ with and without Fibromyalgia: A Longitudinal Study</i> (Release time, 3 WTUs, \$5,000) |

The Center's two directors (Center and Research) and ten affiliated faculty all volunteer their time to accomplish the mission and goals of the Center. Every semester of past three years, the Center had at least 15 active undergraduate and graduate students interacting with fellow peers and faculty across the university. Moreover, each wave of the unfunded longitudinal study (2014 & 2016) had at least 35 research assistants participate through volunteer, practicum, and internship experiences.

The FMCPCC has a main office located within the Health Science Research Labs in KHS 106F (two computers, printer, phone), a data and documents room in KHS 106A (a shared space with other Health Science faculty research team), with additional storage and equipment space in KHS 106G (a shared storage space for all faculty in the Health Science Research Labs). The Department of Health Science assigns the space, while the department chair regularly solicits needed research space among Health Science faculty to determine accommodations for new research projects. Operational costs to maintain electricity, telephone and email services, and other campus facilities are absorbed through the Department of Health Science, while costs related to materials are from the various funding sources from faculty.

Despite no assigned time for faculty efforts, the Center has continued to conduct and maintain high-quality scholarly research and creative activities, provide high-impact practices for students, and engage and collaborate with the community. With the existing funds in the FMCPCC

Philanthropic Foundation account along with the continued volunteer time of the Center faculty and community partners and student practicum, internship, and volunteer experiences, the FMCPD plans to continue wave 5 (fall 2018) of the longitudinal study and maintain the same level of research, scholarly, and community activities as it has during the past three years. Many of the activities during the past three years have been overseen and executed by the Center director and, in an effort to maintain a degree of sustainability into the future, may need to seek additional funding to support the time and efforts through the means of assigned time, intra-, and/or extra-mural funding.

### **Highlights and Accomplishments**

One of the major accomplishments of the FMCPD during the most recent three-year period has been the completion of waves 3 (fall 2014) and 4 (fall 2016) of the longitudinal study as briefly described above. In addition to the recruitment and data collection phases in the fall semesters, the following spring semesters (2015 & 2017), all research participants were invited back to campus for a Feedback Conference to receive a personalized “report card” of their individual assessment scores (including all waves they participated in) and attend workshops developed and presented by students. Workshop topics ranged from nutrition and brain function to positive psychology and improving balance and mobility. Not only have over 75 undergraduate and graduate students (including a McNair Scholar) had first-hand experiences in the recruitment to data analyses phases of research, but many have used the data to present research at national conferences and to complete their masters theses and projects. In fact, during the recent three-year period, seven masters theses/projects in public health, psychology, and nursing were completed; seven peer-reviewed publications were authored by Center faculty and students; and over 20 professional conference posters and symposia and five community talks were presented.

These accomplishments and activities have contributed to the mission and goals of the FMCPD and align with the CHHD mission and two CSUF 5-year Strategic Plan goals. Students are trained and engaged in multidisciplinary research and to offer physical, health, and mobility assessments; they have face-to-face interactions with people living with FM and their caregivers; they raise public awareness and education by presenting in the community and professional conferences; they are exposed and explore different career paths and opportunities; they persist at the university by engaging with Center activities for at least one year, and many have been successfully admitted to graduate programs.

### **Planning and Strategic Outlook**

FMCPD faculty and staff meet to discuss the upcoming goals and activities every semester including grant seeking, research studies, and community engagement. The goals of the Center for the coming 3-year period are as follows:

- 1) Augment the ongoing longitudinal study by completing another wave of data collection;
- 2) Continue to analyze the current dataset using various approaches (longitudinal, cross-sectional);
- 3) Continue to train graduate and undergraduate students in recruitment, instrument development, data collection, data entry, statistical analyses, and data presentation and publications;
- 4) Provide support for research participants and their caregivers, using information generated by the data;
- 5) Provide technical assistance and ongoing support to the local support group;
- 6) Collaborate with the support group and other community and national partners on educational and awareness events;
- 7) Seek additional funding to support the above activities.

These goals are aligned with the Center’s and CHHD’s mission statements and goals.