

### PROPOSAL RELEVANT STATEMENT

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*“Prostate cancer affects many Floridians – either directly or as a relative or friend of someone diagnosed with it. However, there are no state programs to increase awareness of this disease – at least in proportion to other comparable diseases such as breast cancer. Other states have appropriated funds and created programs within their health departments that offer education, screening, and/or research opportunities. Florida should be in the forefront – not lagging behind – especially in light of the large number of men in this state who are affected by prostate cancer.”*<sup>1</sup> This was the conclusion reached by the Prostate Cancer Taskforce created by the Florida Legislature in 1998 under the Florida Laws, Chapter 98 – 305. The charge of this Task Force was “to identify where public awareness, public education, research, and coordination about prostate cancer are lacking and to prepare recommendations to increase research on prostate cancer and the public’s awareness of the importance of the early detection and treatment of prostate.” In spite of the taskforce’s recommendations, Florida still has not enacted any legislation or appropriated funds for prostate cancer activities. Given the magnitude of the racial disparities in prostate cancer and the high prostate cancer morbidity and mortality in Florida, Florida A&M University (FAMU), in collaboration with the University of South Florida (USF) H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center (MCC), is requesting funding to create **“The FAMU Minority Prostate Cancer Training and Research (FAMU MPC) Center”**. At least, 11 FAMU faculty and over 1,000 African American men will directly benefit from this application.

The State of Florida’s prostate cancer statistics mimics that of the nation. The 2002 Florida Cancer Data System provides the following statistics for the 1990 – 1999 age adjusted rates: (i) prostate cancer incidence rate of 158.4 per 100,000 for whites compared to 252 per 100,000 for African American males, and (ii) prostate cancer mortality rate of 28.8 per 100,000 for whites compared to 79.5 per 100,000 for African American men. The long-term goal of the FAMU MPC center is to “eliminate the disproportionate prostate cancer morbidity and mortality experienced by African American men.” Through the FAMU MPC center, we will develop, promote and sustain independent, competitive “Prostate Cancer Research and Training Program” at FAMU, that creates opportunities and promotes careers in prostate cancer research for FAMU scientists by accomplishing the following: (1) Provide formal training, mentorship and collaborative research opportunities for FAMU faculty; (2) Place FAMU faculty in a peer-reviewed, funded prostate cancer research environment designed to foster learning, provide positive mentor / mentee interactions, and cultivate an interest in prostate cancer research career; and (3) Create a series of support networks and activities to assist project participants and the African American community by utilizing cancer center, university, community and national resources.

The FAMU and the MCC are ideally suited to achieving the goal outlined for this proposal. The proposal draws on the strengths of existing prostate cancer scientists in the Basic, Clinical and Cancer Control Programs at the MCC comprised entirely of university faculty members. MCC faculty members have a history of interdisciplinary collaboration and are currently engaged in a number of funded research efforts that provide an excellent scientific environment for the proposed training program. As university faculty, these individuals also have considerable experience in mentoring scientists through both didactic and research experiences. Based on their scientific accomplishments and teaching expertise, the faculty for the proposed research and training program can be considered highly qualified to serve as mentors for individuals seeking to become independent investigators in prostate cancer. Current prostate cancer research activities at FAMU are limited. Over the last five years, four FAMU investigators, *the FAMU Prostate Cancer Research Program Team*, have studied and attempted to find solutions to the prostate cancer disparity experienced by African-American men. Of these four investigators, only one (the Principal Investigator of this grant) has focused her research career exclusively on prostate cancer. As of now, over ten FAMU scientists are interested in developing their expertise in prostate cancer research to be able to address the prostate cancer disparities in the African American community. The combination of prostate cancer training by MCC scientists and collaborative research focusing on the problem of prostate cancer disparity will lead to the desired product for this grant: **successful FAMU prostate cancer researchers.**