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\$2.7-million grant to aid African-American research

By

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[DANIELLE STOPPELMANN \(/PEOPLE/DANISTOP/DANIELLE_STOPPELMANN\)](#), Daily Staff Reporter
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The Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research will continue research into 2020 with the help of a \$2.7-million grant from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health.

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MCUAAAAR — a collaborative research center with bases at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University — aims to identify causes and solutions for health risks for the elderly in racial minority and non-minority groups. The center has received NIH funding for the past 15 years and upon this renewal, the elderly in Detroit will have the opportunity to continue participating in studies.

Peter Lichtenberg, the MCUAAAAR co-director and director of the Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology, said previous research on elderly African Americans has been too broad and not nuanced enough. With the renewed grant, which was announced on Monday, the center will approach research from specific behavioral and social science perspectives, he said.

Specifically, the center will analyze data from sources such as the University's Health and Retirement survey — a longitudinal study of more than 26,000 Americans over age 50 — and data collected in Detroit, Lichtenberg said.

MCUAAAAR will continue providing scholars with opportunities to conduct research on aging and health using \$20,000 of the newly-allocated funding. Junior faculty will also benefit from the additional money through expanded mentorship programs.

"Many of (the junior faculty) have used the study that they did with us to go on to much bigger studies that made a significant impact in the areas of cancer and Alzheimer's disease and mobility," Lichtenberg said.

James Jackson, the MCUAAAAR co-director and a University psychology professor, said the renewed grant will allow the center to train about 15 more junior scholars.

Jackson noted that training the younger generation is crucial as the baby boom generation ages and general life expectancy increases. As 2030 approaches, there will be fewer people under the age of 15 than there are over the age of 60, Jackson added.

"Our long term focus has been on training the next generation of researchers interested in the nature of aging and aging-related phenomena among diverse groups of elders," Jackson said. "This has become even more critical over the last 15 years."

Lichtenberg added that the University of Michigan and Wayne State work well together in mentoring scholars and conducting studies.

"It's a very unique and exceptional partnership between two universities," Lichtenberg said. "That doesn't always happen as well as it has happened between The University of Michigan and Wayne State. I give Dr. Jackson a lot of credit for that."



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