Welch eXperimental Collaboration Retreats (WelchX)  
A Program of The Robert A. Welch Foundation

2024 Call for Applications

**THEME: “CHEMISTRY OF LIFE”**

**Application Deadline:** Friday, March 1, 2024

**Eligibility:**
To participate in the retreat, you must first apply and be selected by the WelchX organizing committee. All early- to mid-career tenured faculty in chemical science disciplines at Texas institutions are eligible to apply. The organizing committee will also consider late-stage Assistant Professors who articulate a compelling rationale for participating (see Required Application Materials). Participants must adhere to the Participation Requirements, including attending the retreat in Austin in its entirety.

**Required Application Materials:**
Submit the following materials as a PDF via Email to conference@welch1.org no later than Friday, March 1, 2024:

1. (Maximum of 1 page) A statement describing your vision as it relates to “Chemistry of Life” and your interest in participating in WelchX.
   a. You may describe your relevant expertise and experience in this field or closely related fields.
   b. Reference citations aren’t necessary, but if included, citations should be in-line in the text.
2. (Maximum of 1 page) A statement describing a research collaboration you have engaged in that you have valued the most. What made this collaboration so meaningful for you?
3. (Maximum of 3 pages) An NIH-style biosketch, including past and current appointments, current grant funding (sources, amounts, project titles, funding period), and up to five (5) publications most closely related to the expertise you wish to bring to the WelchX retreat.

**Program Overview and Purpose:**
The Welch Foundation’s mission is to support fundamental research in chemistry for the betterment of Humankind. This program was initiated to further our mission by bringing together Texas researchers and stimulating them to ideate on challenging issues of our time. WelchX retreat participants will develop the collaborative concepts they design at the retreat into funding proposals to be considered for Welch Foundation collaboration awards ($100,000, for one year).

The goals of WelchX are:

- to stimulate collaborations in significant emerging areas of chemistry,
- to foster lasting connections among the participants, and
- to increase the density of research ties across Texas to spur the growth of basic research.

By focusing on one problem of common interest and by intentional design of the meeting format we aim to create lasting intellectual and personal bonds between chemists across Texas.

For more information, go to [https://welch1.org/grants-programs/welchx-retreat-and-pilot-grants](https://welch1.org/grants-programs/welchx-retreat-and-pilot-grants)  
Questions can be addressed to conference@welch1.org
The theme for the WelchX 2024 collaboration retreat is “Chemistry of Life.”
The retreat’s activities are designed to spur creative, innovative, collaborative ideas that address the most
challenging and unexplored issues in bioorganic, medicinal, analytical, and macromolecular chemistry that
relate to biological processes, bio- and cellular chemistry, structural and chemical biology, molecular
biology, and biophysics.

Topics within this theme could include, but are not limited to:

- **Control of Genome Expression** (chromosome dynamics, communication through DNA, RNA
  regulation, emergent properties of stochastic dynamics)
- **Evolution and Biomolecular Dynamics** (Evolution of complex functions, new concepts from high
  throughput combinatorial strategies, large scale sequence analysis of natural systems)
- **Controlling Chemistry in vivo** (bio-orthogonal chemistry, penetrating the blood-brain barrier)
- **Biofilms and Antibiotic Resistance** (anti-microbial materials, or biofilm inspired materials for
  biomedical applications)
- **Imaging Complexity and Dynamics** (biomolecular machines, cellular tomography).
- **Precision sensors/diagnostics and remediation/therapeutics**

**Participation Requirements:**
The WelchX 2024 retreat is a fully in-person event that will take place at the AT&T Hotel and Conference
Center in Austin, Texas from June 17 – 20, 2024 (Monday – Thursday). There is no registration fee. Hotel
and most meal expenses will be covered by The Welch Foundation; faculty participants are responsible for
covering their transportation costs to and from the retreat. The preliminary agenda is as follows:

- **Monday evening, June 17:** Working dinner and outline of WelchX expectations
- **Tuesday, June 18:** Full day of collaborative research interactions, with interactive programming
designed to introduce all WelchX participants to each other
- **Wednesday, June 19 (full day):** WelchX participants form self-identified pairs or trios and sketch out
  a proposal concept
- **Thursday, June 20 (half day):** Proposal teams present their concepts for peer feedback

Following the retreat experience, proposal teams will work together to refine their concepts and craft a brief,
formal proposal for Welch support ($100,000, for one year).

- **July 9, 2024:** Final proposals due via ProposalCentral
- **July 2024:** Proposals reviewed by Welch Scientific Advisory Board
- **July 2024:** Welch Board approval of WelchX pilot grants
- **August 1, 2024:** Funded projects begin.

**Application Review and Selection:**
A committee consisting of Welch Foundation and Texas academic institutional leaders will review
applicants’ materials and select up to 24 applicants to participate in the WelchX retreat. Applicants will be
selected based on the unique perspectives and expertise that they could bring to the retreat, with
consideration given to balancing institutional representation and sub-disciplinary expertise. Decisions will be
announced on or around Monday, April 1, 2024. If you accept the invitation to participate, you will be
expected to attend the June retreat in Austin in its entirety.