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Owens Institute for
Behavioral Research

The Owens Observer

Newsletter of the
Owens Institute for
Behavioral Research

January 15, 2026

Welcome back, everyone! Hope that you had a restorative break and a good first week of the semester. There are several timely announcements in this issue of the newsletter, along with our usual policy updates and reminders. First, OIBR is kicking off a **new early career mentoring program**, which we teased at the annual meeting in the fall. The program will bring OIBR Distinguished Scholars together with a small group of early career affiliates over a (literal and metaphorical) pot of tea. The first session will be February 6th. See newsletter for details. Second, we are now accepting applications for the **OIBR Faculty Seed Grant Program**. Note that we have raised the funding limit to \$15,000. Third, Russell Sage Foundation President Bruce Western will be delivering a talk on **funding opportunities at Russell Sage on April 3rd**. This is in addition to Western's Owens Lecture ("Poor Justice: Case Studies in Punishment and Inequality"). Hope you can join us for both of these events. Finally, be sure to check out the research spotlight, which showcases **Justine Tinker's** research on sexual harassment prevention programs. Wishing everyone a great spring semester.

Jody Clay-Warner
Director

Upcoming Events



RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

Supporting innovative social science research that explores cutting-edge methods, questions, and policies for the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States.

RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION

INFORMATION SESSION

Join us for an informational session with Bruce Western, president of the Russell Sage Foundation. Dr. Western will provide an overview of the Foundation's mission, research priorities, and grant funding opportunities. This session will be valuable for faculty seeking external funding in the social and behavioral sciences.



Friday, April 3
10:30 - 11:30am



Miller Learning
Center
Room 250

Hosted by



Owens Institute for Behavioral Research
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2026 Annual William A. Owens Lecture

with

Dr. Bruce Western
Russell Sage Foundation

“Poor Justice:
Case Studies in
Punishment &
Inequality”

April 3, 2026

UGA SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY

LECTURE 3:00 - 4:00PM
RECEPTION 4:00 - 5:00PM

Bruce Western is a leading sociologist whose research explores poverty, inequality, and the social impact of incarceration. A Principal Investigator of the Square One Project, he reimagines responses to violence amid poverty and racial inequality. Western is the award-winning author of *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison* and *Punishment and Inequality in America*, and has advised national panels on reducing racial disparities and addressing COVID-19 in U.S. prisons.

Hosted by Owens Institute for Behavioral Research



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SAVE THE DATE

Join us for an informal, year-end get together

A Gathering at the Garden

APRIL 30, 2026 | 4:30 - 6PM

UGA Founders Memorial Garden
325 S. Lumpkin St., Athens

More details to follow



Funding News

Congratulations to our Distinguished Scholars, Affiliates and Grant Development Program graduates who have recently received research project funding

Emma Goodwin

Title: Empowering Genomics Educators: Scalable and Effective Training Models to Build a Skilled Biomedical Workforce through Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences



Agency: NIGMS R25 subcontract from University of Alabama

Project Dates: 8/15/2025-6/30/2030

Award Amount: \$286,018.

To help develop an effective U.S. biomedical workforce, the Genomics Education Partnership (GEP) has trained approximately 24,000 undergraduates over the past 18 years by building collaborative, undergraduate-powered genomics research projects that engage students through Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs). This project seeks to enhance the research engagement of GEP faculty and students using short courses, providing training in new genomics/bioinformatics methods, and expanding participation in scientific presentations and publication, invigorating their research engagement to the benefit of all.

Research Spotlight

Rethinking How Academia Confronts Harassment



[Learn More](#)

Policy Updates



NIH Simplifies Grant Application Requirements

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced new policy changes designed to reduce administrative burden for applicants. Effective immediately, NIH will no longer request or accept Letters of Intent (LOIs), which were

previously used only for internal planning purposes and were not part of peer review.

In addition, NIH has **eliminated the requirement to contact an NIH Institute or Center in advance** when submitting applications requesting **\$500,000 or more in direct costs** in any single budget period (excluding consortium F&A).

Applicants are no longer required to seek prior approval or document that contact in a cover letter.

These updates streamline the submission process and remove steps that were often time-consuming but did not affect funding decisions—making it easier for researchers to focus on proposal development. More information [here](#).

NIH Form Updates Coming January 25th

NIH has announced upcoming changes to its Biosketch and Current & Pending Support formats, which will be required for all proposal submissions, JITs, RPPRs, and prior approval requests due on or after **January 25**. Beginning on that date, NIH will mandate the use of **SciENCv** to generate these forms. More information [here](#).

Opportunities

OIBR Faculty Seed Grants



The Owens Institute for Behavioral Research (OIBR) invites applications for Faculty Seed Grants in the social and behavioral sciences. Seed grant projects should directly contribute to future submission of an external grant proposal. Typical seed grant projects involve collection/analysis of preliminary data or a proof-of-concept. Project budget is limited to \$15,000. Funds will be available July 1, 2026, and must be spent by June 30, 2027. Full details and submission instructions are available on the [OIBR website](#).



We are pleased to announce the launch of **Tea Time**, a new OIBR offering for early career faculty for learning, sharing, and camaraderie. Each month, an OIBR Distinguished Scholar will present information on a professional development topic, allowing time for discussion and Q&A. Sessions will be held 10:00 – 11:00 on the first Friday of every month in the OIBR conference room (249A Brooks Hall). Tea, coffee, and sparkling water will be available. Session topics will be announced each month in the OIBR newsletter.

Once the topic is announced, early career affiliates should email Andrea Horsman (ahorsman@uga.edu) to secure their spot. Each session is limited to 12 participants.

The **first session will be on February 6th** and will feature **Jennifer McDowell** discussing “**Maximizing UGA Resources for Research Success.**” Email Andrea

now to reserve your spot.

OIBR Pivot Funds

The OIBR Pivot Fund 2026 allows researchers to continue to conduct important work, while responding to the current funding climate. Funds can be used to collect data, purchase data sets or equipment, or for other needs, as identified by the investigator, to facilitate submission of an external grant proposal. Funds cannot be used for conference travel or personnel funding (faculty or student). The budget cannot exceed \$5,000.

The application should contain: 1) one paragraph describing your current research; 2) one to two sentences explaining how you are pivoting your research; 3) one page describing the project for which you are seeking funding, your qualifications for conducting the proposed research, and intended external grant mechanism(s); 4) budget, budget justification, and timeline; and 5) a current CV.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis by the OIBR Leadership Team. Send applications (as a single PDF in the order listed above) to oibr@uga.edu, with the subject line "Pivot Funds."

OIBR News



OIBR has an opening for a **Senior Accountant**. Please share this opportunity with anyone you think may be interested in joining our fantastic team! Anyone interested can apply [here](#). Any questions about the position can be sent to **Jenny Claire Carey** at jccarey@uga.edu.

Online Open Office Hours

Starting **January 26**, **Kim Cherewick**, Assistant Director, and **Jenny Claire Carey**, Post Award Operations Manager, will be hosting weekly office hours. Drop in via Zoom from **10-11am every Monday** to ask any grant-related questions. Contact Kim at ksilvis@uga.edu to receive the meeting link or with any questions.



Have news? Please send kudos, announcements or other items to Andrea Horsman at ahorsman@uga.edu. Distribution occurs monthly on the second Monday of the month. The deadline for submissions is the first Wednesday.



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