Dear SSAT Board of Trustees:

Thank you for this opportunity to update the Committee on the conclusion of the 2016-2018 SSAT Health Care Disparities Research Award for our project entitled “Understanding and Reducing Surgical Disparities Using Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS).” I will highlight several accomplishments:

A. Research Accomplishments

1. Completion of Specific Aims. We have achieved each objective of the project. In Specific Aim 1, we demonstrated that ERAS reduces racial/ethnic disparities in post-operative LOS for African-Americans. These results were published in 2017 in the Annals of Surgery [4]. Corollary projects have included a focus on African-Americans with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and other surgical indications [7, 8]. In Specific Aims 2-3, we used qualitative methods to further investigate the potential mechanism(s) by which ERAS may reduce disparities. Through collaborations with the UAB Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center (MHRC) and the Recruitment and Retention Shared Facility (RRSF), we successfully completed 6 focus groups involving 48 ERAS patients (24 African-Americans and 24 Caucasian-Americans). Our findings (9 - manuscript in progress) have showed several factors that may contribute to surgical disparities. One major factor may be health literacy, or an individual’s capacity to obtain, process and understand health information to make health decision. These data have allowed me to obtain a 2017-2019 K12 Career Development Award focused on understanding the role of health literacy in determining surgical outcomes.

2. Dissemination of research findings – Over the last 2 years, we have disseminated our research in surgical disparities through multiple avenues including:

   Publications

   Submitted/In-Progress

   Presentations
   - 2016 – SSAT/DDW, SAAS, ACS Clinical Congress
   - 2017 – Academic Surgical Congress, SSAT/DDW, ASCRS, NSQIP, SAAS, ACS Clinical Congress
   - 2018 – Academic Surgical Congress, SBAS, RACS Congress, International ERAS Society, SSAT/DDW, Academy Health, ASCRS

3. Additional awards/funding – The data obtained from this project has helped us obtain funding from additional sources:
B. Career Development and Training Accomplishments

1. **MSPH** – Funding from the SSAT allowed me to enroll as a part-time MSPH student in the UAB School of Public Health. I am strengthening my quantitative skills while gaining additional knowledge and skills in qualitative research methods.

2. **K12 Career Development Award** - The SSAT Health Care Disparities Research Award provided the data, mentoring framework and grant experience for me to be awarded a K12 CDA (2017-2019). I will be submitting a K23 in June 2018 to further transition from the K12 with the long-term goal of an R21/R01.

3. **Institutional Leadership** – Through my work with ERAS, I was appointed to be the co-Medical Director of ERAS in General Surgery at UAB. I also co-direct the Surgical Innovations and Research Core (SIRC), which is the research arm of the Divisions of GI Surgery and Surgical Oncology.

4. **Additional Awards/Honors** – Several honors were obtained as a result this project:
   - 2016 UAB Health Innovations Award
   - 2017 Dean’s Excellence Award Nominee
   - 2018-2019 Society of Asian Academic Surgeons (SAAS) Visiting Professor
   - 2018 Invited Editor for *Surgical Clinics of N America* on Enhanced Recovery After Surgery
   - 2018 Co-Moderator for ASCRS Session on ERAS and Allied Health Professionals

C. Mentoring Accomplishments

1. **Established mentor network** – Through this project, I have further strengthened my relationships with my mentor team (Sara Knight PhD, Mona Fouad MD, Selwyn Vickers MD, Joshua Richman MD PhD, Melanie Morris MD, Gregory Kennedy MD PhD and Herb Chen MD). This team has been key to the success of this project. I anticipate many continued and future collaborations.

2. **Trainee Development** – Through this work, I have engaged over 40 medical students, surgical residents, and public health researchers in ERAS and disparities research. We have a robust summer program for trainees through the SIRC and had 7 medical students giving 1 plenary, 5 orals and 1 quick shot presentation at the 2018 Academic Surgical Congress in addition to resident participation.

**In summary**, the 2016-2018 SSAT Health Care Disparities Research Award has been instrumental in helping me begin my academic surgery career. My work will continue in identifying, understanding and reducing disparities in surgery. I thank the SSAT and Board of Trustees for this special opportunity and look forward to sharing my work in the years to come.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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