

University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Center (UWIRC)

The University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Center (UWIRC) program was first proposed in 1995 with the goal of promoting interdisciplinary research, education, and service. It was not until 1997, however, that the UWIRC program was fully implemented with initial funding for ten “full” centers and 7 “pilot” centers. In order to receive the designation of a UWIRC, a center must involve the participation of faculty from more than two UAB schools and receive sponsorship from both schools. Currently, there are 25 recognized UWIRCs with 2-3 in the pilot phase.

In 2019 the Center for Palliative and Supportive Care (CPSC) submitted an application to become a designated pilot UWIRC. It was a logical decision for the CPSC to apply for UWIRC status since the CPSC mission and vision aligned with the UWIRC core tenants. CPSC also saw this as a sensible move since the UWIRC program has strong well-qualified interdisciplinary leadership, governance structure, and membership; and the UWIRC goals are aligned with the broad institutional strategic goals. In addition, UWIRC status could assist the CPSC in obtaining extramural research awards and training grants; contribute to faculty enrichment by providing pilot funding to junior researchers; and contribute to faculty recruitment & retention by growing philanthropic endowments.

Since 2012 the CPSC has been led by co-directors Rodney Tucker, MD, MMM (medicine), Marie Bakitas, DNSc, CRNP (nursing), Jennifer Hicks, MSHA, MBA (Admin Director). In 2018, Ronit Elk, PhD (psychology) joined the team to lead the Southeast Institute for Innovation in Palliative and Supportive Care with Aras Acemgil, MBA (Admin Director). They are joined by a thirteen-member inter-professional Steering Team including Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care (**GGPC**) Division Director as an ex-officio member.