

The Oskar Fischer Prize FAQ

Who is Oskar Fischer?

Oskar Fischer was a pioneer in neuroscience who studied dementia at the same time as Alois Alzheimer, for whom the disease is named. His research led to the identification of senile plaques, the signature lesions of Alzheimer's disease and he hypothesized that the plaques were associated with presbyophrenia, then characterized as a form of senile dementia marked by memory loss, memory distortions and disorientation.

In 1907, the same year that Dr. Alzheimer published on his patient with early onset disease, Dr. Fischer published on 12 patients with plaques and tangles, protein strands that appear during Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately, Dr. Fischer's work was cut short when he was removed from Charles University's German University in 1939 and, a few years later in 1942, sent to the Small Fortress, a Gestapo prison, where he died one day later.

Through personal research, Dr. James Truchard, the Oskar Fischer Prize's benefactor, learned of Dr. Fischer's story. He was inspired to make the donation to UTSA to take a new systems approach to the research on Alzheimer's, building on the work started more than a century ago.

What's the goal of the prize?

The Oskar Fischer Prize, the largest of its kind, aims to engage the world's brightest minds to consider the entire story and advance understanding of the disease – and potentially deliver a cure.

Who/how was the Prize founded?

To expand the understanding and explanation of Alzheimer's disease, Texas businessman Dr. James Truchard gave a \$5 million USD gift to The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) College of Sciences to establish the Oskar Fischer Prize.

Dr. Truchard's generous gift will create an international initiative engaging those within and outside of the research community to assess the work done in Alzheimer's through a comprehensive study of articles and research that synthesizes the information into one explanation for the cause of Alzheimer's disease.

Who is Dr. James Truchard?

Dr. Truchard is the co-founder and retired president of the U.S.-based technology company National Instruments. Truchard conceptualized and established the Oskar Fischer Prize to engage the world's brightest minds.

How did UTSA get involved? Or, why are they the benefactors of this gift and executors of the Prize?

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is a world leader in brain health research and will incubate the two-year challenge. In the UTSA Brain Health Consortium, Dr. George Perry, the Semmes Foundation Distinguished University Chair in Neurobiology, and Dr. Jenny Hsieh, Consortium Director and Semmes Foundation Chair in Cell Biology, work with nearly 40 of the nation's brightest scientists to conduct research on brain mechanisms and therapeutics. Coming from diverse experiences and backgrounds, the multidisciplinary team at the UTSA Brain Health Consortium is tackling some of

science's greatest challenges through a collaborative approach that truly makes them unique and different among the research community.

Is this the only Oskar Fischer Prize – or first of its kind in Alzheimer's?

The Oskar Fischer Prize will take a new systems approach to the research on Alzheimer's. Collectively, the monetary awards are the world's largest prizes of their kind.

How can I submit an entry?

The call for proposals is expected to open in late Fall 2019 and will continue through the two-year term of the project. UTSA will work closely with an interdisciplinary committee of outstanding scientists from Texas and around the world to award the Oskar Fischer Prizes. Entries will be submitted via an online submission portal, for which more information will be made available after the formal criteria for the prize is established in the coming months.

What are the criteria for winning the prize?

The formal criteria for the prize will be established by the interdisciplinary committee upon its selection and inception in the coming months. However, Prize submissions should be from individual(s), and not corporate entities. More information will be made available after the final criteria have been defined.

How will winners be selected?

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Who makes up the Interdisciplinary Committee?

UTSA is in the process of carefully vetting and selecting the acclaimed researchers and members of the Alzheimer's and neurosciences community that will compose the interdisciplinary committee. The names of the members will be collectively announced in the coming months once the final committee has been selected and confirmed.

What will winners receive?

The Oskar Fischer Prize will award up to \$4 million USD in Oskar Fischer Prizes, including a grand prize of \$2 million, two second place prizes of \$500,000 each and four third place prizes of \$250,000 each. Collectively, the monetary awards are the world's largest prizes of their kind.

Are there stipulations to how the Prize can be used?

It will be up to the discretion of the winners of the Oskar Fischer Prize to decide how they choose to use or spend the prize money. Additional information regarding specific limitations to how the prize money can be used and responsibilities of the winners will be announced in the coming months.

When will winners be selected?

Key timelines and dates related to the contest, including the deadline for entry and when the prize winners will be announced, will be released in the coming months after the interdisciplinary committee has been formally established.