

Minutes

UW School of Medicine and Public Health Medical Education and Research Committee

5:00 PM December 10, 2007 – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Bill Busse, Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Jeff Grossman, Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Cindy Haq, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Gordon Ridley, Susan Skochelak, Jeff Stearns, Rod Welch

Members Absent: Sanjay Asthana, Greg Nycz, Jeff Stearns, George Wilding

Guests: Mike Fiore

Staff: Tracy Cabot, Cathy Frey, Tonya Mathison, Ken Mount, Karla Thompson, Eileen Smith

The Committee was called to order by Chair Paul DeLuca at 5:12 p.m.

1. The draft minutes from the October 24, 2007 joint OAC/MERC meeting and the November 12, 2007 MERC meeting were presented. The minutes were approved unanimously without modification.

2. Announcements:

a. DeLuca called the members' attention to the revised 2008 meeting schedule. Susan Skochelak noted that April 16 is Medical Education Day, which presents a conflict for a joint OAC/MERC meeting. Eileen Smith said that the program staff would reschedule the joint meeting.

b. Smith announced that she will be circulating the Conflict of Interest policy and questionnaire electronically to all MERC members for their review. The questionnaire form along with a copy of the Outside Activities Report should be returned to her as soon as possible.

c. Smith was pleased to report that WUHF transferred the final "holdback" funds to UW and MCW last week. Each school received \$15.2M which was placed in the endowment accounts according to the requirements of the Grant Agreement. All time-based restrictions have now been removed from the funds.

d. DeLuca drew attention to the 2009-2014 Five Year Plan Outline, which he held for discussion in Agenda Item 8.

3. OAC report: Susan Goelzer reported that OAC received 93 applications for the Community-Academic Partnership Fund, split approximately evenly between development and implementation proposals. The applications are being reviewed, and OAC will meet on December 19 to make final funding decisions. Bill Busse asked what percentage gets funded, and Goelzer said that it runs around 20-25%.

Goelzer announced that David Kindig has been appointed to an open faculty position on OAC. Goelzer concluded by reminding MERC that OAC is working on a special initiative on Birth Outcomes, and expects to receive the consultant's report in January.

4. MERC Executive Subcommittee report: DeLuca reviewed the actions recommended at the Executive Subcommittee meeting on December 3. A proposal for the development of a Chronic Kidney Disease Primary Care Performance Improvement project was submitted by Dr. Richard Rieselbach. Pat Remington moved that this proposal be funded through the addition of funds to the WiNHR budget. Cindy Haq seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DeLuca reported that the Executive Subcommittee considered a request to establish a Program in Community and Public Health Research. This proposal describes a very broad goal of increasing faculty who used evidence-based approaches to social, behavioral, and environmental science for health promotion and disease prevention at the community level. The Executive Subcommittee agreed this topic must be considered as part of the development of the next Five Year Plan. Therefore, the proposal was tabled until those discussions have occurred.

The Executive Subcommittee also reviewed a proposal to support the Wisconsin Antibiotic Resistance Network. While the group recognized the value of this previously federally-funded program, the request was for bridge funding while other sources were sought. The Subcommittee suggested that this does fit with purpose and objective of the Wisconsin Partnership Program funds. MERC concurred.

Other items considered by the Executive Subcommittee are topics on the MERC agenda.

5. Tobacco Use Intervention Proposal: DeLuca explained that the Executive Subcommittee had reviewed this time-sensitive request and recommended approval. DeLuca introduced Mike Fiore, who was asked to present the proposal to MERC.

Fiore started by explaining that the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention (CTRI), which is a nationally recognized leader in tobacco cessation research, has been funded by P50 Center Grant. However, the National Institutes on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funding cycle has changed, and the deadline for the renewal application is in late January 2008. He reminded MERC that Center Grants typically require evidence of institutional support in the form of matching funds. Fiore outlined the key points of his presentation as framing the challenge, describing the new Center Grant proposal, describing the request to MERC, and finally providing context for this work.

The new P50 proposal to NIDA includes three major scientific projects (R01 equivalents), plus three innovative methods cores, support for pilot projects, and the development of a national translational laboratory. The total cost of the proposal is \$9.8M. NIDA has identified UW-CTRI as an entity to submit this proposal, and they are likely to fund only two such applications this year. Of the required \$3M match funding, Fiore has pledged of about \$1.75M from the SMPH, Department of Medicine, UWCCC, and the Chancellor's Office. The MERC Executive Subcommittee recommended \$750,000 in funding, which would bring the match total to \$2.5M.

Fiore described the three focal areas: 1. Development of comprehensive treatment packages based on innovative studies, which will be tested in Wisconsin clinics; 2. Maximization of system-level changes by using EPIC software to prompt doctors to talk to patients about cessation; and 3. Working to increase patient adherence to treatment through technology and various incentives. Treatment services will be given to 3,000 Wisconsin tobacco users, with emphasis on underserved rural and Milwaukee residents.

Fiore explained that this proposal addresses key MERC priorities of expanding public health by thinking about the clinical encounter as an opportunity to improve public health. It also builds partnerships with outreach programs in Milwaukee and statewide. The program is innovative, high impact, and community-based. He has created an interdisciplinary team with 20 collaborators here and 20 more across the country. And obviously, there is a great opportunity for leveraging.

Fiore concluded with a brief update on CTRI activities, including an outline of the use of existing MERC funds to enroll more than 3000 smokers in a five-year study.

Norm Drinkwater asked what other partners are being approached for the remaining match funds, and Fiore said he has talked to the UWHC, UWWMF, CTSA, and of course CTRI. Busse noted that the existing tobacco cessation program has been a model for getting groups to work together, especially in Milwaukee. Busse asked if that will continue, and Fiore noted that the majority of people enrolled in the new program will come from Milwaukee. There are partnerships with new state programs taking place due to increased state funding for services. Fiore added that these programs will expand the services of the quit line to include counseling and provision of a two-week starter kit of medication for those who call the quit line. Haq remarked that the work of the CTRI cuts across research, education, and services. She asked if there are ways to share his strategies for success with other programs. Fiore demurred, noting that the work of the center involves many people and many partners.

There being no further questions, Fiore left the meeting.

DeLuca re-opened the discussion by stating that CTRI spans the full spectrum from basic research to health policy to intervention. He was very enthusiastic about the proposal, but added that the Executive Subcommittee recommended reducing the budget request from \$200,000 per year to \$150,000 per year. DeLuca added that the P50 proposal total of \$9.8M represents direct plus indirect costs; the spendable award would be about \$6M.

Busse expressed his enthusiasm for the proposal, noting that it is both high impact and scientifically sound, and fits well with MERC's goals and objectives. Molly Carnes expressed her support, noting that MERC funds would leverage a successful grant to do even more.

Mary Beth Plane asked if there was any chance that NIH would cut the budget, and if that happened, would MERC funds be reduced proportionally. DeLuca stated that we could place conditions on any MERC award. Drinkwater suggested that we make our award contingent on the P50 grant, and that we match the Chancellor's funds.

Remington added that Haq's point is well taken, and this model could be applied to a number of medical problems.

Tom Grist asked how funding this proposal will effect the MERC budget over the next five years, and Ken Mount noted that \$150,000 per year out of the \$10M annual budget would not have a huge impact. Mount added that this could be funded out of the annual budget, not from the cash reserves.

There being no further discussion, Susan Skochelak moved that MERC provide matching funds of \$150,000 per year for five years, contingent upon successful P50 grant funding. The motion passed unanimously.

6. 2008 Administrative Budget: DeLuca noted that the 2008 Administrative Budget received the unanimous endorsement of the Executive Subcommittee.

Smith reported that the proposed budget for the 2008 calendar year is \$928,000, which is split 35/65 between OAC and MERC. She noted that the increase from 2007 reflects additional staff. Over the coming months 3.25 FTEs will be added. This includes two new program officers for grants management, plus a communications specialist and 0.25 FTE support for an IT specialist, who is already involved in the program. The budget for evaluation has also been increased from 2007. Smith noted that the 2008 administrative budget is about 5% of the total annual WPP budget of \$18.5M.

Busse asked if the new staffing level will be sufficient to cover the workload. Smith replied that it is hard to say if this is enough, because we are always adding more active awards, and we will have several additional big projects in 2008—the development of the Five Year Plan, the WPP program evaluation, and the LAB audit. She noted that it will take some effort to integrate three new staff.

Remington observed that the WPP has grown from one or two employees to nearly 10 people and is nearing a million-dollar budget, which puts it at about the same size as some SMPH centers.

There being no further discussion, Plane moved that MERC pass the proposed administrative budget. Busse seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

7. CHSP: DeLuca summarized the minor changes to the final draft of the CHSP request for proposals. Nieto asked if MERC members are eligible to apply, and DeLuca stated that it follows our recently adopted Conflict of Interest policy. Skochelak asked if we could include the social sciences in the list of boundaries we wish to cross, and DeLuca agreed to amend the list. Nieto asked if faculty at Marshfield Clinic could be co-PIs, and DeLuca explained that they could be collaborators but not co-PIs.

Plane asked if MERC members would be part of the faculty expert review. DeLuca said that MERC members are not likely to be involved at that stage since they will have to review the proposals from the finalists prior to the interviews. This helps to eliminate any conflicts during the review process.

There being no further discussion, Busse moved approval of the amended CHSP RfP. Goelzer seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

8. Overview and Outcomes Subcommittees: DeLuca stated that we need to consider the ideas and issues raised at the MERC Strategic Planning Retreat as we develop the next Five Year Plan. At the last MERC meeting and in the Executive Subcommittee meeting, it was agreed that we would divide MERC members into three subcommittees to explore the themes of Research, Education, and Service / Outreach. DeLuca circulated the list of subcommittee members, and summarized the charge to the subcommittees. Each subcommittee will analyze the appropriate section of Part II, and will also consider the Challenges and Issues in Part III of the Overview and Outcomes document. Taking the Dean's goals listed in Part I into consideration, each group will create a list of priorities. After each group has done their work, we will merge the output into one cohesive document.

Busse asked about the timeline for these activities, and DeLuca stated that we need to complete this work by the end of January or shortly thereafter. Our end goal is to create a document that we can translate into a Five Year Plan with milestones. DeLuca added that Dean Golden's strategic plan for the SMPH will impact the work of the subcommittees.

9. Financial Reporting Process: Karla Thompson circulated a sample financial report which includes suggested formatting revisions. She will be presenting detailed financial reports to the Executive Subcommittee on a quarterly basis, and will provide informational updates to MERC as well. Thompson pointed out some layout details, and asked MERC members to think about possible enhancements. She suggested that the numbers alone do not tell the whole story about any particular project, and she is looking for more meaningful ways to present results to MERC. Ken Mount agreed that looking at the numbers out of context isn't sufficient for most projects, and we should use progress reports together with financial reports to assess each project.

DeLuca asked if we are earning interest on the funds that have been awarded but are not yet spent, and Mount explained that our accounting practices are based on reimbursement, so we do earn interest.

Busse asked about the nature of the problems with the accounts that are slow to initiate spending, and Thompson replied that typically projects are delayed by either IRB issues or lags in hiring staff. Another apparent spending delay can merely reflect the submission of expenditures for reimbursement. DeLuca noted that many of the researchers have a lag in spending for the first six months of the project, while they are dealing with typical start-up issues. Busse suggested that we pay particular attention to New Investigators, because they may need assistance in navigating some of the start-up issues.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tracy L. Cabot,
Recorder