

Minutes

UW Medical School Medical Education and Research Committee 5:00 PM March 16, 2005 – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Lynn Allen-Hoffmann, Sanjay Asthana, Paul DeLuca, Dave DeMets, Maureen Durkin, John Frey, Jeff Grossman, Debra Hullett, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Gordon Ridley, Susan Skochelak, Doug Smith, Jeff Stearns, George Wilding

Members Absent: Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Layton Ridders, Joan Schiller

Guests: Patrick Boyle, Philip Farrell, Mark Hendrickson, Ken Mount, Karla Thompson, Tim Kamp

Staff: Tracy Cabot, Tonya Paulson, Eileen Smith

The Committee was called to order by Vice Dean DeLuca at 5:08 p.m.

1. The draft minutes from the February MERC meeting were presented. No modifications were suggested and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. DeLuca announced that George Wilding was approved by the Academic Planning Council (APC) to fill the Focus Leader position vacated by Jeff Glassroth.

DeLuca also reported that WUHF has approved MCW's annual report.

Eileen Smith reported that she and UW attorney John Dowling met with the attorneys in the State Attorney General's office to discuss the open meetings issue. We are awaiting the AG's advice on this subject.

Dean Farrell announced that the Medical School APC has approved the proposal to change the name of the school to the School of Medicine and Public Health. This proposal must be approved by vote of the full Medical School faculty, before it can proceed to the University APC, University Committee, Faculty Senate, Chancellor and Board of Regents. We hope these steps will occur in the next academic year.

3. The MERC adjourned briefly for a group photo.
4. Ken Mount distributed the updated the funds flow spreadsheet. Because the MOU for the Health Improvement Program has not been signed, it has not been added to the spreadsheet. The bottom part of the spreadsheet shows the annualized MERC budget in terms of what funds have been committed going forward and what balance is still available.

Mount also explained that the Annual Report requires a certification regarding non-supplanting. He reviewed each project approved by MERC and by Dean Farrell from the Strategic Allocation

by 12/31/04 to ensure that no existing funds have been replaced. He explained that if such an issue were to arise, it would come back to the MERC for resolution. In addition, there is an appeal process involving UW Legal Services and UW Auditing Services. Mount asked for the group's approval of his certification. Moss moved that the document be approved as presented, and Doug Smith seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

5. DeLuca gave a brief update on the RFP for New Investigators. The deadline for applications is April 1. The Application Review Subcommittee has been appointed and approved; and they will hold their first meeting during the first week of April to develop the timeline and process for proposal review. The goal is to present the Application Review Subcommittee's recommendations to MERC in May or June, with awards announced by July 1.

6. Rick Moss introduced a presentation of a revised proposal requesting support for a Regenerative Medicine program. Since the last MERC meeting, the Executive Subcommittee met and discussed the original proposal. While they agreed with the need for this type of program, they encouraged the PIs to revise the application to address the concerns expressed at the last MERC meeting. The revised proposal was circulated to the MERC earlier this week.

Tim Kamp described the revised program. He highlighted the aims of the program, which are to develop core facilities to provide interdisciplinary resources to researchers, foster collaborations, and take advantage of the synergy to bring the promise of regenerative medicine to fruition in the form of treatments for various disease processes.

The revised Regenerative Medicine Program will consist of four Core Facilities. Core 1 is Stem Cell Resources, with Jamie Thompson as PI. The function of this core is to generate cell lines that express marker proteins to be able to select cell populations. Core 2 will be the Immunology/Pathology Core, lead by William Burlingham. There are immunological barriers to transplantation of stem cells, and these barriers must be removed in order to develop treatments for disease. This core will use the humanized mouse model to study transplanted human ES cells. Core 3 is the Non-Human Primate Core, which will be chaired by Joe Kemnitz of the Wisconsin Regional Primate Center. Use of ES cells in humans raises concerns about safety and efficacy, which therefore requires testing in monkeys. Core 4, lead by Jamey Weichert and Clive Svendsen, is the Imaging Core. This core will involve the tracking of transplanted ES cells in vivo and determining their fate, and will require the ability to image whole animals as well as individual cells. Some support for equipment for this core has already been pledged by the Medical School and WARF.

Kamp showed the annual budgets for each of the core facilities, which totaled \$1 million per year for the first four years. In the past month, Kamp and Svendsen have received funding promises from a number of partners. Specifically, the UW Foundation, WARF, as well as a number of departments and centers have pledged funding for this project. Thus, the request to MERC is for \$300,000 per year, with an additional request to the Strategic Allocation of \$100,000 per year.

Moss outlined some responses to the concerns raised at the February MERC meeting. He explained how this proposal will be tied to translational research and that these cores are intended to overcome roadblocks to the application of stem cell biology to clinical medicine.

Another concern was the issue of supplanting, and Moss described the lack of campus funds for translational stem cell research. Furthermore, federal grants will not support the startup of core facilities. Funds that have been pledged by the Governor to stem cell research on campus will be used for construction, not for translational research. While the original dollar request to MERC was not acceptable, in the past month, the PIs have identified a number of partners on campus to leverage this application.

Finally, Moss explained how this proposal relates to many of the principles of the Wisconsin Partnership Fund, including the promotion of health and the prevention of disease, community involvement, and the acceleration of existing efforts and stimulation of new initiatives to transform the Medical School and provide a margin of excellence.

DeLuca asked for discussion of the revised proposal. Frey asked about the budget, and specifically what the \$300,000 per year would be used for. Kamp explained that in general it would be used for personnel dedicated to these activities, and also the purchase of supplies and reagents. He stressed that no PI salaries are included in this proposal. Frey asked if the cores will bring people together in a new fashion. Kamp said that the cores will provide essential services that investigators across multiple disease types all need. The cores will bring a wide variety of people together, and it is anticipated that they will have monthly meetings to talk about what has worked, how to solve problems, etc. Moss added that in his experience, tremendous synergies arise out of cores—these are points of interaction across disease entities. Frey suggested that one role of the advisory group would be to make this research understandable to others. Adding members from clinics and the community to the advisory committee would enhance the diversity of perspectives of the group.

Wilding asked if the four cores serve the four major projects that are the basis of the NIH grant proposal. Kamp said that while that was the original vision, we now realize that the cores will be available to all investigators on campus. This program will move forward independent of the NIH grant.

Nycz suggested that in order to have an impact on the health of the communities, we would have to overcome the existing barriers. One such barrier is the inequality of availability of the research results. He suggested that it might be possible to work on policy issues now, while the bench researchers are at work. Farrell gave the example of the Neuroscience Training Program working with LaFollette Institute regarding public policy. Allen-Hoffmann noted that this is a good point—getting the results out to the public will require people who have experience with the FDA, etc. This could have potential to move fast, so we need good advice from people with broad background. Durkin asked what the group is doing in terms of education and outreach to the State and to the people of Wisconsin. Kamp noted that Linda Hogle and Alta Charo in Medical Ethics, and Clark Miller in LaFollette have been working on those public policy issues. There being no further questions, Kamp left the meeting.

DeLuca asked for other discussion about this proposal. Nieto asked if there is a detailed budget for the use of the funds. Mount explained that the budget submission would be required as part of the MOU, in order to determine non-supplanting.

Frey noted that it would be helpful to understand the process goals or ways of measuring success for this proposal. DeLuca explained that the governance structure, benchmarks and core goals are elaborated in the actual proposal.

Stearns stated that it is critical to support this type of basic science research with huge potential for impact. The concern is the length of time between when the money is spent and when there is impact on community health. Farrell said that some aspects are more readily applicable to the promotion of health, for example, the imaging core using cellular and molecular imaging for the early detection of breast cancer. Another example is the potential for using stem cell transplants for diabetes rather than using pancreas transplants. Perhaps MERC funds can be directed to the areas that will have more immediate impact.

Nycz reiterated his concern that the community be involved by broadening the advisory group, and suggested that it be a condition of funding. Frey was also concerned that funding be directed to areas that have more direct impact, and that the people of the state are educated about the activities of the Regenerative Medicine program. Skochelak recommended approval of the budget of \$300,000 per year for four years; with the Strategic Allocation request subject to the Dean's decision. She also suggested that the MOU spell out line item details for funding, such as recommended above. Nieto asked if funding for this proposal is conditional on the NIH grant, and DeLuca said no. Asthana added that this support will improve the chances of funding for the NIH application. Nieto supported Skochelak's recommendation, and Allen-Hoffmann seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

7. DeLuca presented a draft of the Annual Report, which covers a nine month period. The goal is to go to press in early April, and submit the report to the Board of Regents for action at their May meeting. Comments should be sent to Eileen Smith ASAP. Smith asked the group to focus on the Dean's overview, the MERC section, evaluation, and communication with OAC.

8. DeLuca mentioned topics for future MERC meetings. We need to review the results from the planning grants in May and June, in order to make implementation decisions in July. Also, we have to discuss how to deal with ad hoc requests for funding that are submitted to MERC in the absence of any call for proposals. We may need a moratorium on funding until we discuss the outcomes from planning grants.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tracy L. Cabot, Recorder