

## Minutes

### **UW Medical School Medical Education and Research Committee 5:00 PM September 11, 2006 – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center**

Members Present: Sanjay Asthana, Bill Busse, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Maureen Durkin, Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Jeff Grossman, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Gordon Ridley, Jeff Stearns, George Wilding

Members Absent: Molly Carnes, Dave DeMets, Susan Skochelak

Guests: Patrick Boyle, Robert Golden, Kevin Wymore, Kathy Massoth, John Sender

Staff: Tracy Cabot, Ken Mount, Tonya Paulson, Eileen Smith, Cathy Frey

The Committee was called to order by Vice Dean Paul DeLuca at 5:01 p.m.

1. The draft minutes from the July MERC meeting were presented. No modifications were suggested and the minutes were approved unanimously. DeLuca also circulated the draft minutes from the September Executive Subcommittee meeting for review.
2. DeLuca announced that Lynn Allen-Hoffmann's term as Emerging Opportunities Focus Leader expired during the summer, and she has decided to step down from the MERC. Dean Golden will appoint her replacement in the near future. Additionally, Susan Skochelak has accepted the appointment as focus leader for Innovations in Medical Education. DeLuca also introduced new MERC member Tom Grist.

Eileen Smith circulated the MERC meeting schedule for the current academic year. Smith announced that she has received notification that WUHF has accepted our 2005 Annual Report. This means that one half of the balance in the restricted fund has been released for transfer into the endowment account.

3. Ken Mount presented a financial report that showed the cash flow model and balance in each MERC account (startup, endowed, and restricted). Initially, WUHF agreed that the Wisconsin Partnership Fund could use \$30M of the transferred funds as startup. That startup fund was split, 35% OAC, and 65% MERC, with about \$19.5M available for MERC awards during the first five-year plan. The initial balance of non-startup MERC funds included \$65M in the endowment account and \$108M in the restricted account. All three accounts earn interest.

Mount explained that our "full endowment" spending model is based on spending as if the full \$300M Blue Cross/Blue Shield award had been endowed without restrictions on day one, and that those funds were earning at least 4.75% interest. With those calculations, we have aimed for an annual steady-state MERC budget of \$9M per year. This figure would allow for the initial ramp-up of programs and multiyear programs, while keeping interest earnings and spending

levels roughly even. Because we have not spent the full \$9M in 2004 or 2005 as the big projects have taken time to develop, MERC has a one-time cash bubble of available funds of about \$13.5M. WUHF expects us to spend that money in the next two to three years. MERC needs to plan for awarding additional funds of about \$4-5M per year in next two to three years.

Tom Grist asked if there are any restrictions on what these one-time spendable funds can be used for, and Smith responded that the restrictions are the same for all funds. Sanjay Asthana asked for clarification of the amount available for one time expenditure, and Mount repeated that the figure is \$5M each year for the next two to three years. George Wilding observed that our “regular” budget is \$9M per year, and with the use of these one-time funds we need to plan carefully or we could get criticized. Javier Nieto asked if these figures apply to the Dean’s Strategic Allocation or just the MERC portion of the 65%, and Mount explained that these numbers are the combined totals for the 65%. Wilding asked about OAC, and Mount explained that he has made a similar presentation to OAC about its one-time spendable funds. Maureen Durkin expressed concern that some of the core proposals were asked to make budget cuts. She expressed particular frustration that children were eliminated from the SHOW study and suggested reconsideration of this decision.

4. DeLuca observed that this point made a perfect transition to the next agenda item, which is Strategic Planning. So far, MERC has followed the original five-year plan which outlined the funding categories, including the focus areas, MPH program, and transformation to an integrated school of medicine and public health. Furthermore, we made our spending estimates based on a steady-state model, but have learned that it takes time to ramp up spending on any award. Therefore, this is an opportunity to advance a number of items, or revisit some items, to take advantage of a one-time cash balance.

Dean Golden talked about his strategic planning goals for the SMPH and for MERC. He has decided to focus on four principles, rather than specific projects, which have the acronym BELT:

1. Balance: Consider the advantages of having a broad-based, wide reaching portfolio, including some short term and some long term projects. Some projects in the portfolio will have good chance of success, with others may be riskier. Be sure that the whole range of the research component is represented—molecular to clinic to population. The same idea goes for the range of education—students to professionals to population. His goal is to cover a lot of bases, but to do so deliberately and well.
2. Excellence: Push forward by investing in the next generation of outstanding faculty and programs. Programs and people supported must fit with the SMPH strategic plan, and must avoid supplanting—but look for fresh opportunities.
3. Leverage: Take advantage of this resource to bring in additional funding sources (matching funds). Also, look for return on investment, such that projects initially supported by MERC are able to continue through external support, which validates our decisions.

4. Transformation: Becoming an integrated school of medicine and public health by effecting changes in both in research and education. This includes integrating research from sub-molecular to patient to population, and also includes health policy and healthcare reform, which are areas outside the traditional school of medicine.

Golden also mentioned the need for evaluation in each area.

Bill Busse asked if we should view the one-time funding opportunity as an active process, meaning is this a SMPH decision, or a MERC decision, or should we wait for applications to bubble up. Golden said that it is bi-directional, and that we should look for balance between targeted strategic opportunities and new ideas.

Greg Nycz stated that frequently, things that are good for the school are also good for the public. However, if there are two opportunities that have opposite scores, which do you pick—the one that helps the public or the one that helps the school. Golden said that he would pick the program of excellence.

DeLuca suggested that MERC may want to identify areas for proposals to take advantage of the available funds. This may tie in nicely with the upcoming agenda items about the Collaborative Health Sciences program, as well as the discussion of how to deal with unsolicited proposals, and what to do with the unsolicited proposals we've already received. Rick Moss suggested that we build on our core funded programs, by developing RFAs to use the resources of SHOW and WiNHR. DeLuca agreed, but also would like to have further discussion about Durkin's suggestion about including children in SHOW as well as other needs.

5. DeLuca circulated a draft outline for the Collaborative Health Sciences RfP, and asked for comments. Drinkwater suggested slight modifications to the education bullet, to emphasize novel approaches. He also suggested that given the earlier discussion about our cash on hand, perhaps this program should make more awards in the first year and reach a steady state of five awards per year in the future. DeLuca stated that he would rather announce the program as making up to five awards, but reserve the possibility of funding additional proposals with substantial merit.

Nycz raised concerns about the eligibility requirements, and suggested that it would help the SMPH to build bridges to other schools on campus by allowing their faculty to apply as Principal Investigators. DeLuca and Golden emphasized that the PI must be in the SMPH in order to maintain accountability.

Durkin argued that people who enter into a collaboration need to receive credit for their efforts. She suggested that the wording regarding collaborators or co-PIs be made stronger. DeLuca stated that the idea for a project can come from either partner in a collaboration, but the SMPH investigator must be the PI. Durkin also asked if a co-PI could come from another UW campus, and DeLuca said yes.

Grist suggested that Dean Golden's BELT idea be included in the review process for the Collaborative Health Sciences application.

There was a general discussion about the use of Letters of Intent for this RfP. Moss asked if the LOI would be used to limit the number of full applications received, by selecting a balance of proposals. DeLuca and Drinkwater expressed concern about using the LOI as a filter, and Busse suggested that the LOI should be used only for planning purposes, such as constructing a review committee. It was agreed that the Collaborative Health Sciences RfP would require a Letter of Intent, that would be used only for technical screening of eligibility and to help constitute a review committee.

DeLuca described the review process for this program, and suggested that MERC ask each department chair to nominate two people who can be called upon to review proposals on an ad hoc basis. The committee agreed to this suggestion.

Grist moved that MERC move forward with the development of a full RfP for the Collaborative Health Sciences Program, and Plane seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. DeLuca showed a list of unsolicited proposals that have been received by the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Some of the proposals have been generated by the investigators after discussion with DeLuca. For example, the development of a CTSA program is critical to our School. Additionally, the Center for Molecular and Environmental Toxicology has recently become a SMPH center, and is undergoing substantial changes that will make it well aligned with the Wisconsin Partnership Program's mission.

Plane asked if this list represents formal proposals, and DeLuca responded that some of them are detailed (if they have a price tag), while others are less so. Drinkwater asked if these were targeted to MERC or to the Dean's Strategic Allocation, and DeLuca said that they could potentially be aligned in either category. Nycz asked if there are NIH funding opportunities for any of these proposals, and DeLuca said that some of them could receive external funding, especially the CTSA program.

DeLuca asked the group to first focus on process, rather than content. Golden suggested that MERC develop a process using the Executive Subcommittee or another group to do a preliminary review of proposals received. DeLuca agreed, and suggested that we develop a standardized proposal form and format, and use this process for handling the applications we already have in hand. Then we announce the process for how we'll deal with applications going forward. Ridley asked if consideration of proposals would be on a rolling basis (whenever they come in), or should if proposals would be evaluated on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.

Drinkwater expressed concern that this process will exclude basic science from funding. Durkin countered that basic research need not be excluded, but the proposals need to explain how they will improve the health of the people of Wisconsin.

Grossman cautioned the group to separate the content of these applications from the discussion of process—right now we have some money to spend, and some existing strategic priorities, and new priorities, and we've received unsolicited proposals. We want to have a process that can stand into the future. We should assess what MERC has achieved in terms of the decision matrix

and the full portfolio of awards and use that assessment as a template for decision making. Grossman also expressed concern that a small group (the Executive Subcommittee) would be making the decisions.

Wilding suggested that we reassess MERC's strategic plan, to make sure that existing activities are adequately funded. He noted outstanding items such as tissue banking and biostatistics support that are still in development will subtract from surplus funds. Of the proposals received thus far, only the CTSA program needs an answer very soon, because they will be submitting an NIH grant in January and need to include strong institutional support. Wilding concluded that MERC probably shouldn't decide about any of the other proposals without knowing what the cash balance will be after the core facilities above have been established.

Goelzer and Remington both noted that the CTSA could fit into the Dean's Strategic Allocation, because of the need to move quickly, to make an investment in future infrastructure, and to take advantage of leveraging. Golden countered that the goals of the CTSA program overlap with goals of MERC, and could be supported by both the Strategic Initiative and MERC funds.

Drinkwater asked for an approximate figure that the CTSA program will be requesting, and DeLuca responded that it is likely to be \$1.5-2M per year for the next two or three years. Golden suggested that Drezner come to the next MERC meeting with numbers and a programmatic presentation. Nycz said that it would be helpful if OAC had an orientation to the CTSA program at the joint OAC / MERC meeting in October.

DeLuca deferred consideration of the remaining ad hoc proposals until after the CTSA presentation.

7. DeLuca asked for their regarding the mechanism for appointment and turnover of the Executive Subcommittee. He suggested that it should be composed of two standing members (MERC's chair and vice chair), along with five additional members at large. Members' terms would be staggered initially (one or two years terms). Executive Subcommittee members would be elected in a democratic process, using a ballot of all MERC members except those serving on the basis of their position in the SMPH administration. All MERC members except the Chair would vote by ranking all nominees in order. This election process would be repeated yearly.

Moss agreed to the process, but asked if we are uncoupling service on the Executive Subcommittee from focus group leadership. DeLuca said yes. Moss asked if we are then eliminating focus group leaders, and DeLuca said no.

MERC unanimously agreed to the election process, and a ballot was circulated for immediate voting. Results will be announced by e-mail.

8. Goelzer presented the framework and process for a joint evaluation. The team developing the evaluation plan consists of OAC and MERC members, as well as others. The team has identified long term and short term goals, along with eight major topics for evaluation. The eight topics are: SMPH Transformation, Uniqueness of Grant Funding, Dissemination & Knowledge Ttransfer, Alignment with Goals of the State Health Plan, the Strategic Initiative Fund, Balanced

Portfolio and Translational Research, the Community Academic Partnership Fund, and Governance, Stewardship, and Public Accountability. The evaluation team has been discussing and debating the subquestions for each topic, plus the indicators or data needed to answer each question. Public comment on the evaluation plan will be solicited.

Plane asked who is collecting the data, and Goelzer responded that it will fall heavily on program staff. Plane added that the use of external reviewers will have an impact on the budget for this process, and asked if this will be done annually. Goelzer said that it will be an annual event, but some questions cannot be done every year or won't have measurable indicators yet.

9. Nieto reported on the progress of the SHOW award. A number of personnel have been hired, including a research program manager, three assistant scientists, a grad student, and a student hourly worker. Two additional positions are pending hires—a programmer, as well as a program assistant.

Nieto was pleased to report that he has finally received state approval for purchasing the vans. These two vans should be delivered in April. Space for the two fixed clinics is still in negotiation in Milwaukee and Madison.

Two Advisory Committees have been formed to focus on Survey Instruments and Survey & Sampling Design. These groups have broad representation from SMPH and other schools, the UW Survey Center, State Laboratory of Hygiene, State DHFS, and CUPH. A subcontract is being made with Dr. Kalsbeek at the UNC Survey Center. These committees hope to finish their work in December, to be submitted to the IRB in Spring 2007. The goal is to hire field team personnel, conduct training, and begin surveys by July 2007.

Many consultation meetings have occurred, including with the CTSA Program and with DoIT and other IT personnel on options for IT infrastructure for transmission and storage of data. Other consultant meetings were held with GLITC regarding recruitment of native Americans and with June Martin Perry, who is a public member on OAC, regarding recruitment of minorities in Milwaukee.

SHOW would like to use the planning grant carryover funds to hold a symposium in late Spring 2007. Nieto concluded by asking for MERC input on the creation of a governance structure (lines of authority) for SHOW.

Busse asked how would researchers get access to the data. Nieto explained that there are three routes: external funding for additions to the survey, use of the public database, and use of collected and stored samples. Obviously, a governance structure will be needed to make decisions about what ancillary studies can be added, and who will use the stored samples.

11: Nycz reported that OAC is currently in the process of searching for two new members, one faculty member (a call for nominations has gone to department chairs) and one minority representative (the nominating committee is soliciting applications).

Nycz mentioned several items that OAC would be interested in learning more about during our Joint Meeting in October. These include the applicability of MERC funded projects to community health improvements, discussion of the changes to the New Investigator Program, how to engage public health oriented faculty, and how to build cross campus connections.

Nycz concluded by reporting that OAC has funded George Mejicano's proposal for continuing education for the public health workforce.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Tracy Cabot, Recorder