

Minutes

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

5:00 PM November 20, 2006 – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Sanjay Asthana, Bill Busse, Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Paul DeLuca, Dave DeMets, Norm Drinkwater, Maureen Durkin, Jeff Grossman, Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Gordon Ridley, Susan Skochelak (phone), Jeff Stearns, George Wilding

Members Absent: Greg Nycz

Guests: Patrick Boyle, Robert Golden, Marc Drezner, Maureen Smith, Ruth Benca, Howard Bailey, Jon Sender

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

The Committee was called to order by Vice Dean Paul DeLuca at 5:04 p.m.

1. The draft minutes from the September MERC meeting were presented. No modifications were suggested and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. Eileen Smith announced that 74 letters of intent have been received for the Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP). She reminded the MERC members that they agreed to be the reviewers. Full applications for the CHSP are due on January 3, 2007. Paul DeLuca and Jeff Grossman will make the review assignments, and applications will be circulated to MERC members during the second week of January. Each application will have one primary and two secondary reviewers. Each MERC member can anticipate receiving about 10-12 proposals to review.
3. DeLuca announced that the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) proposal had been presented to the MERC Executive Sub-Committee on November 6, 2006. The subcommittee proposed a number of modifications to the proposal, and asked Marc Drezner to make a presentation to MERC for consideration.

Marc Drezner presented an overview of the proposal for the UW-Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (UW-ICTR). Drezner explained that the UW-ICTR will be a community-academic partnership that will create an innovative infrastructure to remove the roadblocks to translation of health-related research results into practice in communities. This infrastructure will support a continuum of activities extending from investigation through discovery to translation into clinical practice, thereby linking even the most basic research to real and measurable improvement in human health.

Drezner explained that the UW-ICTR will be submitting a grant proposal to the NIH Clinical and Translational Research Award (CTSA) mechanism to support these activities, and he showed the budget for each. Drezner outlined the core areas of the CTSA application, which include: Administration, Research Support Services, Career Development and Education, Community / Academic Partnerships including Type II Translational Research (T2TR), and Biostatistics and Informatics. This grant proposal requires evidence of institutional support, so Drezner showed a budget outlining requested contributions from MERC, the CTSA grant, and other sources. MERC support is requested for the Community / Academic Partnerships and the Biostatistics and Informatics core.

The budget for the entire CTSA proposal, including all sources of matching funds, is \$19.4M per year. Of that total, Administration is \$4.9M, Research Support Services is \$5.1M, Career Development and Education is \$4.7M, Community / Academic Partnerships is \$3.1M, and Biostatistics is \$1.6M. The CTSA will provide about \$11M per year. The request to MERC is for roughly \$3M per year, for the life of the award.

Bill Busse observed that the request to MERC fits well with our mission. He asked how the UW CTSA application's budget compares with that of other schools that received these grants. Drezner said that NIH has given awards in the range of \$60M to \$70M over five years. Therefore our request of \$55M over five years is right in the ballpark. The size range of the awards is somewhat dependent on each school's previous levels of GCRC support. In addition, Drezner noted that the range of institutional contributions is anywhere from \$30M to \$90M over five years. We have a generous support system with multiple types of investments, including some funds for simple operation, but also including 15% clinical space investment in the IRC research towers. Our partnership with Marshfield Clinics provides the funding for about 15 nurses doing clinical research. We are also expecting in-kind contributions from UWHC and St. Joseph's Hospital.

Javier Nieto asked if this proposal includes documentation of the other support for some of the existing activities. Maureen Smith answered that a number of things aren't included in this proposal to MERC because we aren't asking for MERC funding for those components. Those items will be listed as matching funds in the final proposal. Nieto asked if we are building on existing programs, and Smith explained that she had talked to a number of groups to learn how they would be engaged with this program. The budget shown represents how these groups would expand their existing activities.

Nieto asked if the proposed Health Extension Program is related to another proposal being developed jointly by the Departments of Family Medicine and Population Health Sciences, and Smith answered that this extends that proposal out to the community to get them engaged in participating in translational research.

Sanjay Asthana noted that this request includes funding for three new faculty members, which doesn't seem sufficient. Drezner said that he hopes to be able to use the MERC funds to get the faculty started, and then once they receive individual grants to cover parts

of their salary, freeing up MERC funds to hire more faculty. Busse added that combining the K12 grant into the CTSA will result in additional salary funds available.

Asthana reported that in his experience, the evidence of institutional commitment is critical to grant applications such as the CTSA. He observed that about 25% of the budget is made of matching funds from the institution, and asked about the sources of those funds, and what portion would be new money. Drezner replied that there is a complex budget matrix that is being put together; some of the support is in-kind, but the MERC funds would be new money. .

Mary Beth Plane said that in her experience, research in communities costs a lot of money. She expressed concern that the Community / Academic Partnership portion of the budget is low compared to the cost of administration. Drezner said this budget includes only the funds for pilot projects under control of the UW-ICTR. Other awards made by MERC could also be considered as interdisciplinary translational pilot funds, such as the NIP.

Nieto stated that the MERC cannot make any funding commitments beyond the end of the current five year plan in 2009. Dean Golden agreed and indicated that he will be taking great care in drafting the institutional support letters.

Drinkwater observed that the majority of the request to MERC is for developing T2TR. Drinkwater asked if the IT costs included in the proposal are for the whole institute or just for T2TR, and Drezner explained that it is about 75% T2TR, and 25% UW-ICTR.

Maureen Durkin asked for clarification about the existing MERC initiatives such as SHOW and WiNHR which will appear in the application. Drezner said that SHOW and WiNHR will both be included as institutional commitment for the application, but this request is for funding beyond those two programs. DeLuca explained that we will need to integrate IT support of WiNHR with the CTSA program, because there is significant overlap in those two activities. Smith added that the Community / Academic Partnerships need to create synergies and build on what has been done to date by MERC and OAC. We can't think of it as a separate program; rather, we need to build on existing strengths without creating duplications.

Durkin asked if approval of this request tonight would be contingent on the successful CTSA grant application. Drezner said that many aspects of the CTSA application already exist; for example, the GCRC, and the TEAM and Clinical Research Scholar K12 grants. However, we need to launch ASAP to show success and progress and move some of the cores forward. At this point in the meeting Marc Drezner, Maureen Smith and Dave DeMets were excused.

Busse made a motion that we approve the proposal for the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research at an amount of \$3,043,487 per year through March 2009. Drinkwater seconded the motion with the addition that it include the recommendation that continuation of support upon evaluation and approval by MERC be incorporated into

the next five year plan of the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Rick Moss asked if support for this request would come from our cash reserves, or from our annual budget, and how this would impact our ability to sustain existing activities. DeLuca stated that we would have no budgetary difficulties in funding this request.

Plane suggested that the partnerships be given greater emphasis in the final proposal to NIH. Due to the very compressed timeline for this application, we can't be as in-depth as we'd like to be.

Durkin suggested that MERC require re-evaluation of this program annually, and Golden agreed that such oversight would be appropriate.

Susan Skochelak observed that this proposal sets up the infrastructure to have meaningful community academic partnerships, which is exactly what we want to do in the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

There being no further discussion, the motion was called, and passed unanimously with one abstention.

4. Ruth Benca explained how the Application Review Subcommittee combined a MERC priority score and a scientific score to determine the rankings of the New Investigator Program applicants. The top 11 finalists were invited to make presentations of five to seven minutes, with three minutes each for questions. The presentations were assigned in random order.

Moss moved that Pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(c), (e) and (f), the MERC adjourn into closed session to interview the faculty finalists and to determine the grant awards for the competitive New Investigator Program. Drinkwater seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

After the completion of the 11 presentations, MERC reconvened into open session. DeLuca stated that our obligation is to decide which of these to fund. We've said we will fund up to five. However, MERC can fund ten in any calendar year, and this is the only competition this calendar year. Our ability to fund greater than five is not an issue.

Drinkwater suggested that each MERC member rank the proposals now, and reserve final funding decisions until after staff have collated the rankings. DeLuca reiterated that it would be useful to decide how many to fund, irrespective of the rankings. Benca commented that although the Application Review Committee spent a long time and careful effort on the reviews, MERC had the additional benefit of listening to the presentations and asking questions. Therefore, there could be movement in the rankings.

Busse suggested that MERC members rank the proposals and come back in December to make final funding decisions. Cabot suggested that each MERC member write on their ranking sheets the number of proposals they would be comfortable funding.

DeLuca agreed, and asked MERC members to rank the proposal from 1 (best) to 11, and to include a suggestion for number of grants to award.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tracy L. Cabot, Recorder