Members Present: Paul DeLuca, Marc Drezner, Susan Goelzer, Craig Kent, Robert Lemanske, Pat McBride, Paul Moberg, Greg Nycz, Tom Oliver, Pat Remington

Members Absent: Betty Chewning, Clive Svendsen, Rod Welch

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

1. Welcome and introductions

Paul DeLuca, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:10pm. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the reorganized Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC) and asked members to introduce themselves.

2. Overview of the Wisconsin Partnership Program

Eileen Smith, Director of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP), provided an overview of the WPP’s history, governance structure, and policies and procedures.

The WPP is governed by three major documents:
- **Order of the Insurance Commissioner**: Approved the conversion of BC/BS to a for-profit entity and the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of the company to the two medical schools, and established the structure and requirements for the distribution and allocation of funds.
- **Grant Agreement**: Agreement between the UW Board of Regents, WUHF, and the UW Foundation (UWF) transferring the funds from the sale of the BC/BS and enumerating the obligations of the UW Board of Regents, WUHF, and UWF.
- **Five-Year Plan**: Describes the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the WPP, major objectives and direction of the WPP, and the funding categories for the MERC and OAC initiatives.

Smith highlighted the following MERC policies and processes described in detail in the WPP Policies and Procedures Manual: (1) Conflict of Interest Policy, (2) Reapplication Policy, (3) Non-Supplanting Policy, (4) WPP Diversity Policy, and (5) Grant Award Management Process.

3. Endowment and financial management

Mount presented the financial projections through February 2009, including a historical review of the endowment from inception to date. The historical review included a description and analysis of the accounts held at UWF, the spending policy of UWF and breakdown/split between the two committees, 35% for OAC and 65% for MERC.
Mount also described the cash reserves of approximately $40 million and the assumption that those funds must last through calendar year 2010. In order to make sure that the $40 million extends through calendar year 2010, existing grantees have been instructed to prepare budgets that are at 75% of the original annual award. WPP staff will report both the value of the endowment and current spending on a quarterly basis.

4. Medical Education and Research Committee

Paul DeLuca presented an overview of MERC’s role and responsibilities. MERC is responsible for allocating and distributing funds for education and research, and approving the WPP’s annual budgets, annual reports and five-year plans. MERC also regularly monitors the progress of grants and assesses their programmatic impact.

MERC is a thirteen member committee with five SMPH Dean appointees (four SMPH administrative leaders and one appointment external to the SMPH), two department chair appointees (basic sciences chair and clinical chair), four elected positions (three SMPH faculty and one academic staff), and two OAC appointees.

MERC has awarded 78 grants since 2004 for over $43 million in three grant categories: (1) targeted initiatives to develop research and education infrastructure and networks, (2) competitive initiatives providing funding to junior faculty via the New Investigator Program and to senior faculty via the Collaborative Health Sciences Program, and (3) strategic initiatives awarded by Dean Golden to support the SMPH transformation.

As a result of the work of three subcommittees focused on education, research and community engagement, MERC finalized a framework for the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan including: education, research and community engagement initiatives; strategic priorities of faculty development and expansion in public and community, health service research and health policy; and collaboration of OAC and MERC on public health issues.

5. Oversight and Advisory Committee

Susan Goelzer, chair of the OAC, presented an overview of OAC’s role and responsibilities. OAC is responsible for allocating and distributing funds for public health, and approving the WPP’s annual budgets, annual reports and five-year plans. OAC annually advises and comments on MERC’s expenditures and assesses the allocation between public health and health care provider education and research.

OAC is a nine member committee with four health advocate appointees, one Insurance Commissioner appointee, and four SMPH appointees. The chair and one public member elected by OAC also serve on MERC: Susan Goelzer, Professor of Anesthesiology, and Greg Nycz, Executive Director of the Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc. and Director of Health Policy for Marshfield Clinic.
OAC has awarded 103 grants since 2004 for over $26 million in two grant categories: (1) the Community-Academic Partnership Fund (CAPF) which supports community-based partnerships and initiatives to improve health policies, practices and interventions, and (2) Public Health Education and Training (PHET) which supports education and training opportunities for public health professionals and the broad public health workforce via the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute and the Wisconsin Population Health Fellowship Program.

OAC will continue to support both grant categories in the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan with a commitment of $10 million over five to ten years for a targeted CAPF initiative aimed at reducing birth outcome health disparities in Wisconsin, the Healthy Birth Outcomes Initiative.

6. Questions and Answers

Paul DeLuca clarified that the OAC and MERC have two joint meetings each year; the first meeting will take place on June 17. Susan Goelzer and Greg Nycz report monthly on the activities of each committee. DeLuca also reports quarterly to OAC on MERC’s activities.

7. Next steps

Paul DeLuca reported that the May MERC agenda will include two targeted reapplication presentations: Survey of the Health of Wisconsin by Javier Nieto and Transforming Medical Education by Christine Seibert. Eileen Smith added that both reapplications are currently undergoing an external review which will be shared with MERC prior to the presentations.

The 2009 MERC meeting schedule was distributed. Meetings typically take place on the second Monday of each month from 5:00-7:00pm in room 4201 HSLC. There are two joint meetings scheduled with the OAC – the first joint meeting is on Wednesday, June 17, 1-3pm, in room 4201 HSLC. The joint meeting agenda will include a presentation by David Erickson of the UW Foundation on the value of the WPP endowment and the UWF’s investment philosophy. In addition, there will be two presentations on successful community grants.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 6:20pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison