Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
December 14, 2009 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Betty Chewning, Marc Drezner, Norm Drinkwater, Craig Kent, Robert Lemanske, Paul Moberg, Rick Moss, Greg Nycz, Tom Oliver, Pat Remington (Skype), Rod Welch

Members Absent: Susan Goelzer, Pat McBride

Invited Guests: Maureen Smith

Other Guests: Sandy Wright, Department of Population Health Sciences

Staff: Cathy Frey, Tonya Mathison, Mike Mirer, Ken Mount, Dick Reynolds, Eileen Smith, Karla Thompson

1. Call meeting to order

Moss called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

2. Announcements

Revised 2010 meeting schedule

The revised meeting schedule for 2010 was distributed. Meetings will continue to take place on the second Monday of each month, 5-7pm. Joint meetings of the MERC and the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) are scheduled on May 19 and November 17.

3. Approval of November 9, 2009 draft minutes

Welch seconded a motion made by Oliver to approve the draft November 9, 2009 minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Strategic discussion of Wisconsin Partnership Program financial portfolio

Moss presented the revised general principles for endowment growth and distributions for consideration by MERC. The document included OAC’s revisions to the general principles and the following two new operating principles: (1) To maintain at least one-year of reserves in the WPP spendable accounts. (2) To review annually in December the UW Foundation’s (UWF) stipulated endowment distribution of 4.75%, and revise, as necessary, for the upcoming year. MERC’s approval of the general and operating principles will be sought in January 2010.

Mount presented an overview of the WPP endowment value and the impact of inflation, specifically (1) the annual impact of inflation on original value of WPP endowment since January 1, 2006, and actual annual endowment value, and (2) the annual MERC revenue since 2006 with inflation, and projected MERC revenue based on the annual UWF endowment distribution of 4.75%.
Moss provided an overview of MERC initiatives in 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan, including the new initiatives on faculty development and expansion and collaboration with OAC through community engagement. Moss proposed reducing the amount and number of Collaborative Health Sciences Program and New Investigator Program (NIP) awards. And, appointing two new faculty, focused on the Dean’s priority areas, in 2011 with up to six new faculty hires within three years. Drinkwater questioned limiting the NIP to a maximum of two awards given MERC’s focus on faculty development and expansion. Nycz considered targeting the NIP awards to specific health topics in collaboration with OAC.

Mount presented the financial projections for the WPP through November 2009. The projected value of the endowment is $290.8 million with a remaining cash balance of $18.4 million for MERC. Mount also presented the annual revenue budget for 2010-2012, assuming a 4.75% distribution from endowment as valued at the end of the preceding year. Given this budget, Moss asked members to consider that some grantees will have to reduce their dependency on MERC funding going forward to make funds available for new initiatives, as described in the Five-Year Plan.

5. Presentation on targeted reapplication for the Health Innovation Program

Maureen Smith, MD, PhD, MPH, presented an overview of the targeted reapplication for the Health Innovation Program (HIP), including a progress report since inception. $874,546 is requested over three years to create an innovative model of health services research that partners new researchers with health care organizations to design, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve health care delivery. This will be accomplished by (1) increasing the number of UW trainees and faculty who choose careers in health services research, (2) creating educational opportunities and a supportive climate for these investigators, (3) using a collaborative model of research that engages investigators with local healthcare organizations, (4) targeting projects, community partnerships, and high-priority conditions to improve the delivery of care, (5) becoming a statewide resource for shared research and learning, and (6) becoming nationally recognized and financially sustainable.

Nycz commented on Dr. Smith’s work, but questioned if the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, as a major beneficiary of these quality improvement efforts, should fund the program. This would free-up the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) funding to focus on expanding these efforts statewide. Dr. Smith responded that the primary focus of HIP is on building faculty careers in health services research at UW-Madison. Nycz concluded that although not a current effort, quality improvement and application of knowledge across the state of Wisconsin should be considered long-term goals. Smith added that HIP will be better able to focus on knowledge dissemination as faculty mature in the program.

Remington commented on Dr. Smith’s exceptional work and outstanding track record. Citing the budget request for $75,000 per year for faculty start-up, he questioned HIP’s role in the
upcoming recruitment of a Health Services Research faculty member in the Department of Population Health Sciences. Dr. Smith indicated that HIP is not involved in that recruitment.

Oliver noted that a significant portion of the matching funds from the initial grant period remain unspent. He pondered the barriers to spending those funds, if the same level of support from those agencies will continue, and if consideration would be given to targeting those funds to knowledge dissemination. Dr. Smith responded that HIP is a growing program, and in order to remain sustainable, future support from the WPP is expected in addition to the matching funds.

Drinkwater asked for clarification on the relationship between the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) – Community Academic Partnership (CAP) Core and HIP, specifically what portion of ICTR-CAP funds are redirected to HIP. Dr. Smith estimated that between 10 and 15% of ICTR-CAP funds go to HIP, and indicated that the benefit of ICTR-CAP to HIP is significant.

Since there were no further questions, Moss thanked Dr. Smith for her presentation and excused her from the meeting.

6. Adjournment-Closed Session: Pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1) (c), (e) and (f) to make a recommendation concerning the awarding of a competitive targeted grant for the Health Innovation Program and to consider the faculty finalists to be interviewed for the competitive Collaborative Health Sciences Program. The meeting is expected to reconvene into open session.

Moberg seconded a motion made by Drinkwater to adjourn the meeting into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1) (c), (e) and (f) to make a recommendation concerning the awarding of a competitive targeted grant for the Health Innovation Program and to consider the faculty finalists to be interviewed for the competitive Collaborative Health Sciences Program.

Drinkwater made a motion to return to open session after considerable discussion by MERC of the targeted reapplication for HIP, and consideration of the faculty finalists to be interviewed for the competitive Collaborative Health Sciences Program. Oliver seconded the motion which was approved with eight affirmative votes. Drezner, Lemanske and Remington were not present for the vote.

Nycz seconded a motion by Drinkwater to confirm the following motions made in closed session:

**Health Innovation Program**: MERC awarded $874,546 over three years to Maureen Smith for the Health Innovation Program. MERC appointed a small group of committee members to meet with Dr. Smith to share MERC’s perspective on the following issues:
• HIP’s need for core infrastructure support going forward, including the appropriateness and potential focus of future support from MERC. In the event that future funding is provided by MERC, implementation of a declining funding model was discussed.
• HIP’s possible role as a catalyst for organizational quality improvement and its role in disseminating and translating knowledge for the benefit of Wisconsin’s residents.
• HIP and MERC’s roles in expanding the health services research infrastructure in the School.
• Clarify the relationship between HIP and ICTR, and the associated organizational structure. And, describe HIP and ICTR-CAP’s partnerships with other entities across the UW-Madison campus.
• Questions related to funds for faculty start-up in HIP budget.

**Collaborative Health Sciences Program:** The MERC Collaborative Health Sciences Program Application Review Subcommittee provided a ranking of the seven full applications for MERC’s consideration in selecting finalists for interviews. After considering the results of the evaluation, MERC decided to interview the top two ranked applicants. Interviews will take place in January 2010. The seven applicants will be notified of their status.

The motion was approved with eight affirmative votes. Drezner, Lemanske and Remington were not present for the vote.

7. **Discussion and decision on 2010 Wisconsin Partnership Program administrative budget**

Eileen Smith presented the 2010 WPP administrative budget, including a description of personnel costs, other expenses and the Legislative Audit Bureau audit fees. Nycz seconded a motion by Drinkwater to approve MERC’s portion of the 2010 administrative budget. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. **Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) report**

Nycz provided an overview of the November 18, 2009 OAC meeting. The OAC appointed Katherine Marks to fill the vacant co-chair position left by Lorraine Lathen on the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) Steering Committee. Marks is the Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Kenosha County and has been a member of the LIHF Steering Committee since its inception. The LIHF Community Action Planning Grant Request for Proposals resulted in four Notices of Intent, one from each of the targeted communities: Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine. Letters of invitation for full proposals were sent to the respective Convening Planning Agencies.

OAC continued its discussions on strategic grant making and priority setting with the goal of developing one or more major project priorities to leverage School and MERC strengths and collaborative opportunities to achieve a meaningful impact in Wisconsin’s population health outcomes over the next five to ten years. OAC convened a workgroup in July 2009 to review and analyze the results of the *Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State* project and other relevant
sources to identify a smaller set of potential priorities for OAC’s consideration. The workgroup, consisting of Susan Goelzer, Rick Moss, Eileen Smith, Cathy Frey, David Kindig, Bridget Booske and Pat Remington, met in October 2009 and identified criteria for selecting potential priorities for the Community-Academic Partnership Fund, which would also support strong collaborations with MERC. The workgroup identified twelve health topics and prioritized the following focus area which OAC unanimously endorsed in November 2009: Promoting healthy weight, physical activity, and good nutrition, and reducing the incidence and severity of overweight and obesity, which increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

9. **Holiday celebration – Next meeting, January 11, 2010**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison