Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
February 8, 2010 at 5:00PM – Room 3330 Health Sciences Learning Center

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

Members Absent: Marc Drezner, Susan Goelzer

Staff: Chris Blakey, 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

Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families video
Smith reported that the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) was highlighted along with several other campus-wide community-engagement initiatives in a video presented at a recent UW System Board of Regents meeting. The video was played for MERC and has been posted on the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) website.

Outcome reports on concluded MERC grants
Outcome reports highlighting the results of seven recently concluded MERC grants were distributed and will be included in the 2009 Annual Report and posted on the WPP website.

Legislative Audit Bureau Audit
Smith reported that the Legislative Audit Bureau has been in contact with the WPP Office as work is being done to complete the audit report on the programmatic activities of the WPP.

Health Innovation Program
Following MERC’s request in December 2009, Moss reported that WPP staff and several MERC members met with Maureen Smith to review several issues raised by MERC during the discussion and approval of the targeted renewal grant for the Health Innovation Program (HIP). There was agreement by those who participated in the meeting that HIP funding for start-up of faculty with an interest in health services research and community engagement should not be a responsibility of the program, but should be a collaborative effort involving MERC and Dean Golden. It was also emphasized that there are faculty outside of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health who are similarly engaged in health services research and the development of a campus-wide approach to health services research. Rick Moss and Pat Remington will discuss this with Dean Golden.
3. Approval of January 11, 2010 draft minutes

MERC unanimously approved the draft minutes of January 11, 2010 following a motion by Drinkwater and a second by McBride.

4. Oversight and Advisory Committee update

In February, the UW System Board of Regents approved the appointment of Katherine Marks, CEO of the United Way of Kenosha County, to the OAC as an urban health representative. Ms. Marks has served as a member of the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) since its inception in January 2009, and recently became co-chair along with Phil Farrell of the LIHF Steering Committee.

In January, the Convening Planning Agencies from each the four targeted communities, Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine, submitted LIHF Community Action Planning Grant proposals for OAC’s consideration. The proposals are currently being evaluated by a review team appointed by OAC which is made up of two OAC members, three LIHF Steering Committee members, two maternal and child health experts, and two mothers from the targeted communities who gave birth to premature babies. Award decisions will be made by OAC in March or April 2010.

On January 20, 2010, the OAC continued its discussion of the 2010 Community Academic Partnership Fund Request for Partnerships (RfP). There will be a greater emphasis on the following: (1) the translation and application of evidence-based practices, (2) health outcome-based project evaluations, (3) promotion of healthy weight, physical activity, and good nutrition, and the reduction of the incidence and severity of overweight and obesity, and (4) faculty-community partnership development activities. OAC also decided to follow the National Institute for Health (NIH) guidelines for faculty level of effort and support, eliminating the 15% base salary restriction. $50,000 awards will be available for one- or two-year Development grants and $400,000 awards for three-year Implementation grants.

5. MERC cash flow and financial projections

The revised General Principles for Endowment Growth and Distributions was unanimously approved by MERC following a motion by Remington and a second by Drinkwater. The revised document included the following revisions:

- Replaced the first general principle with “To generate sufficient growth in the endowment over market cycles to provide annual distributions that account for inflation and fees.”
- Defined “reserves” in the first operating principle to include at least one-year of budgeted administrative expenditures and one-year of budgeted expenditures on existing OAC and MERC awards.
Mount presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through January 31, 2010. The projected value of the endowment is $294 million with a remaining cash balance for MERC of $16 million. Mount also presented an analysis of the WPP’s first operating principle, “To maintain reserves in the WPP spendable accounts, including at least one-year of budgeted administrative expenditures and one-year of budgeted expenditures on existing OAC and MERC awards”. The presentation concluded with discussion of MERC’s 2010 annual revenue budget, assuming a 4.75% distribution from endowment as valued at December 31, 2009.

6. Discussion of proposed revisions to 2010 New Investigator Program Request for Proposals and timeline

Moss presented a summary of proposed modifications to the New Investigator Program 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP). There was general agreement by MERC to incorporate the following changes:

- **Introduction and Background Information**: Incorporate MERC’s 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan research goal of “supporting research programs encompassing biomedical sciences, patient care and the health of populations through prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure of disease, and the reduction of health disparities”.

- **Scope of Funding**: Increase award amount from $90,000 to $100,000 to be expended within two years. Indicate that typically three projects are funded each cycle.

- **Preliminary Grant Application**: Require a preliminary application made up of a two-page abstract and the Principal Investigator’s (PI) NIH biographical sketch. MERC and appropriate experts will review each preliminary application to determine if it warrants further development as a full application. The evaluation will be based on scientific or educational merit, MERC program objectives, and alignment with the WPP mission, vision and guiding principles.

- **Full Grant Application**:
  - Allow up to three tables or figures, not included in the page limit for the proposal narrative.
  - Reorder the primary review criteria to list first, “The project is innovative and has outstanding merit”.
  - Add new secondary review criterion of: “Evidence of departmental support and resources for the project, such as compensated protected time, facilities or other appropriate resources, is indicated in the nomination letter from the SMPH Department Chair”.
  - The Health Innovations Program will provide training and guidance for PIs invited to submit full applications.
  - Allow the PI to request salary support. The compensated appointment of the PI cannot exceed 30% FTE annually.
  - Require letters of commitment if the PI is collaborating with agencies external to the University of Wisconsin System.

- **Grant Award Process**: Require annual Financial Status Reports.
- **MERC Taxonomy**: Include the Guide for the Classification of Research and Education Proposals to the MERC (basic research, type 1 translational research, clinical research, type 2 translational research, applied public health research, and education).

There was general agreement to release the RFP on April 2, 2010. WPP staff will hold an information session for applicants on April 13. Rick Moss and Pat Remington will be available to answer questions. Preliminary applications are due in May with full applications due in September. MERC will make a decision on the awards following interviews of the finalists on December 13, 2010.

Additional revisions to the RFP should be sent to Smith before the next MERC meeting. Final approval of the revised RFP will be sought in March.

7. **Interim progress report presentation on Shared Resources for Interdisciplinary Research for Wisconsin Institute for Medical Research (WIMR) Phase 1**

Mount presented an interim progress report on the targeted grant, *Shared Resources for Interdisciplinary Research for Wisconsin Institute for Medical Research (WIMR) Phase 1*. WIMR is designed to provide opportunities to implement research from basic discoveries to clinical and population health applications. The main research topics of investigators in WIMR are breast and prostate cancer, stem cells, and imaging sciences. This award provides funding for resources for WIMR that fall into two major categories: shared molecular biology equipment and animal facility caging and ancillary equipment necessary to operate the vivarium. At this time, all equipment has been ordered and received with the exception of one system still under construction. There was general agreement to accept the report.

8. **Review of interim progress and final reports**

**Collaborative Health Sciences Program interim reports**

*Closing the Gap on Pediatric Health Disparities: Discerning the Causes and Consequences of Iron Deficiency in Infancy*

Moss reported that following MERC’s review in November 2009 of Pamela Kling’s interim progress report for *Closing the Gap on Pediatric Health Disparities*, Dr. Kling provided a written response to MERC’s summary review comments. Rick Moss and the two MERC reviewers, Marc Drezner and Rob Lemanske, met with Dr. Kling in January 2010 to discuss her responses. Additional information was requested by writing regarding Dr. Kling’s plan to improve the project’s retention rate. Her response is expected later this month for MERC’s discussion in March.

*Wisconsin Childhood Lead Levels and Educational Outcomes*

At MERC’s request, Marty Kanarek provided a written response to MERC’s summary review of his interim progress report for *Wisconsin Childhood Lead Levels and Educational Outcomes*. 
Chewning made a motion to accept the report and the written response. She noted that the two documents together provide a better understanding of the difficulties Dr. Kanarek has faced in recruiting an adequate sample size for the project. Chewning added that MERC will closely review the next annual progress report covering the period ending August 31, 2010 to confirm that the recruitment of an adequate sample size will be sufficient for analysis. Nycz seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

**Vitamin D Inadequacy: Documentation in Rural Populations and Evaluation of Correction by Food Supplementation**

Moberg provided an overview of the interim progress report for Neil Binkley’s grant, *Vitamin D Inadequacy: Documentation in Rural Populations and Evaluation of Correction by Food Supplementation*. Dr. Binkley has made acceptable progress toward achieving the project’s goal and aims. Preliminary results show that vitamin D supplementation via food fortification at higher doses is achievable and safe. The project has been expanded through a NIH R01 grant evaluating the impact of vitamin D supplementation on cardiovascular disease and diabetes in Native American populations. Lemanske seconded a motion by Moberg to accept the report with a request that Dr. Binkley be advised of the importance of clearly outlining the progress associated with each specific aim, and writing the concise summary for a general audience. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Individual Stroma-Targeting Therapy in Breast Cancer**

Drinkwater and Remington provided an overview of the interim progress report for Andreas Friedl’s grant, *Individual Stroma-Targeting Therapy in Breast Cancer*. Dr. Friedl has made acceptable progress toward achieving the project’s goal and aims. The research team has succeeded in finding that the growth of breast tumors is determined not only by characteristics of the cancer cells, but also by interactions with adjacent connective tissue cells, or fibroblasts. They unexpectedly found that the same inhibitors that slow down cancer cell growth when in contact with the tumor fibroblasts can accelerate growth when the cancer cells are in contact with normal tissue fibroblasts. This finding will likely have important implications for therapeutic strategies. One publication has resulted and several collaborative grants have been submitted. Nycz seconded a motion by Remington to accept the report with a request that Dr. Friedl provide more details on the grants that have been submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Patient-Specific Induced-Pluripotent Stem Cell Models for Human Disease**

Moss and Welch provided an overview of the interim progress report for Tim Kamp’s grant, *Patient-Specific Induced-Pluripotent Stem Cell Models for Human Disease*. Although start-up of the project has been slower than expected, which Dr. Kamp attributed to a lengthy IRB review, the project is poised for rapid progress in the second year of funding. MERC deferred acceptance of the report so that the committee can learn more from Kamp about the delay experienced in obtaining the IRB’s approval for this research, and the mycoplasma contamination of the primary cultures.
Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin

Remington provided an overview of the interim progress report for Gloria Sarto’s grant, *Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin*. Although there have been some delays in implementing the project due to a lengthy IRB review, establishing data use agreements, and purchasing participant incentives, the research team is making acceptable progress toward the goal and aims of the project. MERC discussed the impact of the recent announcement that the African American infant mortality rates in Dane County seem to be increasing again. McBride seconded a motion by Remington to accept the report and request that Dr. Sarto indicate whether the change in the rate of infant deaths will have an impact on the goal and aims of the project. The motion was unanimously approved.

Menominee Smoking Cessation Clinical Trial

Moberg and Nycz provided an overview of the interim progress report for Stevens Smith’s grant, *Menominee Smoking Cessation Clinical Trial*. Although there have been multiple delays during the initial year of the project, the research team is making acceptable progress toward the project’s goal and aims. Pending IRB approval and finalization of the Memorandum of Agreement between UW-Madison and the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, participant recruitment and the smoking cessation intervention are poised for implementation. Nycz seconded a motion by Moberg to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

Healthy People/Healthy Systems: The OPTIMISE Model

Lemanske and McBride provided an overview of the interim report for Bennett Vogelman’s grant, *Healthy People/Healthy Systems: The OPTIMISE Model*. The OPTIMISE Model has been used in the SMPH Internal Medicine Residency Program to strengthen residents’ competencies and improve patient outcomes. The team has successfully addressed all five of its specific aims and has published the findings for all but one. The outcomes have been assessed, presented and published. McBride seconded a motion by Lemanske to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

New Investigator Program final reports

Healthy Children Strong Families – Supporting Caregivers Improving Lifestyles

Oliver and Remington presented an overview of the final report for Alexandra Adams’ grant, *Healthy Children Strong Families – Supporting Caregivers Improving Lifestyles*. Preliminary data shows that caregivers involved in the study appeared to benefit from participation. For children, the benefits were less clear. Thorough analysis of the data is expected to be completed by May 2010. This project is an example of a successful community-academic partnership. The Oneida Tribe incorporated the project as a regular tribal program. The project resulted in four publications, two presentations, and four posters. In addition, Dr. Adams is preparing two manuscripts. Oliver seconded a motion by Remington to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.
Metabolic Control of Metastasis by a Master Regulator of Neurogenesis: Molecular Mechanisms and Therapeutics

Drinkwater and Moss presented an overview of the final report for Avtar Roopra’s grant, Metabolic Control of Metastasis by a Master Regulator of Neurogenesis: Molecular Mechanisms and Therapeutics. Dr. Roopra has successfully addressed the goal and aims of the project. Over 90% of breast cancer mortalities are due to metastasis, or spreading, of the initial tumor to distant sites in the body. He discovered a novel way to inhibit this process and has isolated a new metabolic sensor in cancer cells that controls the migration of tumor cells. In addition, Dr. Roopra identified a gene that causes a very aggressive type of therapy resistant breast cancer. This work was highlighted in a local news broadcast and publications are under review. Moss seconded a motion by Drinkwater to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

Targeted final reports

Master of Public Health (MPH) Degree Program

Remington declared a conflict of interest and left the room during the discussion. Nycz provided an overview of the final report for the Master of Public Health (MPH) Degree Program. Remington was successful in achieving the goal and aims of the project. An exceptional curriculum was developed with collaboration and growth in the dual degree programs. Sustainability of the MPH Program continues to be a concern. Moss encouraged Program leadership to pursue tuition recapture through the University. There was general agreement by MERC that the committee would consider a proposal to develop the distance education of the Program. Chewning seconded a motion by Nycz to accept the report. The motion was approved with ten affirmative votes. Remington was not present for the vote.

Recruitment of Middle-Aged African-Americans for Studies of Preclinical Alzheimer’s Disease

Chewning presented an overview of the final report for the Recruitment of Middle-Aged African-Americans for Studies of Preclinical Alzheimer’s Disease. Dr. Sager was successful in achieving the two aims of the project by (1) increasing WRAP recruitment and baseline testing of adult children of African Americans with Alzheimer’s Disease living in Milwaukee County, and (2) developing a model of minority recruitment that can be used in Milwaukee County by other SMPH research protocols. The research team has worked hard to establish community partnerships and to conduct outreach to the target community. These partnerships have allowed the project to implement an appropriate and respectful model of recruitment and will serve the SMPH well in the future. Oliver seconded a motion by Chewning to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

Regenerative Medicine Program targeted interim report

Moss and Welch provided an overview of the interim report for the Regenerative Medicine Program. The cores of the Program are operational and provide excellent service to stem cell researchers. The Immunology and Pathology Core has succeeded in developing a mouse with a human immune system, which is proving valuable to many investigators on campus. In
addition, the Whole Animal Imaging Core and the Tissue and Cellular Imaging Core provide services to several investigators. The latter core has undergone a change in leadership with the departure of Dr. Clive Svendsen. Moss seconded the motion by Welch to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

9. **Adjourn – Next meeting March 8, 2010**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 7:35pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison