Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
March 8, 2010 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

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

Members Absent: Marc Drezner, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer

Staff: Chris Blakey, Cathy Frey, Tonya Mathison, Mike Mirer, Ken Mount, Eileen Smith, Karla Thompson

1. Call meeting to order

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

2. Announcements

Legislative Audit Bureau audit
Smith reported that the Legislative Audit Bureau has been in contact with the WPP Office regarding completion of the audit report on the programmatic activities of the WPP next month.

May 19, 2010 joint OAC/MERC meeting cancelled
Moss announced that the joint meeting of the MERC and OAC scheduled on May 19, 2010 has been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. The next joint meeting will take place on November 17, 2010.

Future presentation on Institutional Review Board
Since several grantees have reported on a lengthy Institutional Review Board (IRB) review process, there was general agreement by MERC that it would be helpful to get an update on the Health Sciences IRB at an upcoming meeting. Dr. Drezner and Nichelle Cobb, Health Sciences IRB Director, will be invited to present the update.

WPP Newsletter
Smith provided an overview of the inaugural quarterly WPP e-Newsletter, highlighting the Program’s latest news and upcoming events. It is set for release later this week.

3. Approval of February 8, 2010 draft minutes

Kent seconded a motion by Remington to approve the draft February 8, 2010 minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.
4. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) update

Nycz reported on the February 17, 2010 OAC meeting. Following a presentation by Tom Oliver on the Wisconsin Population Health Fellowship Program, the OAC unanimously approved the $570,482 budget for the period April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2011. The Fellowship Program, one of three public health education and training programs funded by the OAC since 2004, to-date has supported 23 two-year fellowships. The majority of fellows work in state and local public health agencies, including the Wisconsin Division of Public Health and the City of Milwaukee Health Department. The program has three major goals: (1) Strengthen Wisconsin’s public health workforce and leadership, (2) Build individual skills and career opportunities, and (3) Benefit communities and public health agencies. Currently, 40% of graduating fellows are working in Wisconsin.

The OAC agreed to a revised timetable for release of the Community Academic Partnership Fund 2010 Request for Partnerships (RfP). The RfP is scheduled for release on April 23, 2010. Grants will be awarded in December 2010.

5. MERC cash flow and financial projections

Mount presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through February 28, 2010. The projected value of the endowment is $296 million with a remaining cash balance of $24 million.

6. Discussion and decision on 2010 New Investigator Program Request for Proposals

Moss presented a summary of proposed modifications to the New Investigator Program 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP):

- **Submission and Review Dates**: The RFP will be issued on April 5, 2010 followed by an applicant orientation session on April 13. Preliminary applications will be due May 14. Applicants invited to submit full applications must do so no later than September 10. MERC will interview finalists and make award decisions on December 13.

- **Proposal Narrative**: The following items are not included in the page limits: footnotes, references, and up to three tables and/or figures.

- **Department Chair Nomination Letter**: Include an overview of start-up funds provided by the School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) department, the SMPH, the UW-Madison Graduate School, or other sources.

- **Letters of Commitment**: Applicants collaborating with an organization(s) external to the University of Wisconsin System must include a letter(s) of commitment providing evidence of the collaboration with specific details on how the organization(s) will be involved or support the project.

- **Use of Funds**: The compensated appointment of the Principal Investigator cannot exceed 30% FTE annually.
Guide for Classification of Research and Education: There was general agreement by MERC to revise the definition for “Education” and to include a new description:

- **Definition**: Proposals to develop or enhance education methods, increase capacity, and/or improve the capability of the current or future public health and health care workforce to improve health in Wisconsin.
- **Description**: Educational proposals can include those that improve current educational programs or develop and implement new programs addressing unmet educational and workforce needs. The target of these proposals can be along the continuum from health professionals in training to existing public health and health care workers. Evaluation of educational proposals should address not only dissemination of new knowledge but also changes in behaviors and practices leading to improved health outcomes.

McBride seconded a motion by Remington to approve the New Investigator Program 2010 RFP with the discussed revisions. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Review of interim progress and final reports

Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP)

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

MERC reviewed a letter from Pamela Kling in response to the committee’s concerns about the retention rate for her CHSP grant, *Closing the Gap on Pediatric Health Disparities: Discerning the Causes and Consequences of Iron Deficiency in Infancy*. The letter described efforts to improve retention rates and to provide rigorous follow-up with patients. Oliver seconded a motion by Lemanske to accept Dr. Kling’s letter. MERC will assess the impact of these efforts in Dr. Kling’s next interim progress report, due September 2010, and determine the appropriateness of releasing funding for the final year of the project.

*Final report, Improving Cardiovascular Risk Prediction Using Hand-Held Carotid Ultrasonography*

Chewning and Moberg presented their review of Jim Stein’s final report for *Improving Cardiovascular Risk Prediction Using Hand-Held Carotid Ultrasonography*. The project was successful in transferring state-of-the-art cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk prediction and risk management techniques from the University of Wisconsin to community practices, to improve the effectiveness of CVD prevention. The project achieved its three aims: (1) Physicians and other health care professionals from five community practices were trained to perform carotid artery ultrasound studies and to measure carotid wall thickness, demonstrating that community physicians can successfully use carotid ultrasounds for CVD risk prediction. (2) When abnormal carotid wall thickening was seen, physicians used the information in patient education and prescription of preventive therapies. (3) After 30 days, 34% of participants increased their exercise frequency, 62% made dietary changes, and 37% reported weight loss. Moberg seconded a motion by Chewning to accept the report. The motion was approved with
nine affirmative votes. McBride abstained. In order to sustain this project and to expand it to other clinical practices, it was recommended that Dr. Stein and Maureen Smith, through the Health Innovation Program, explore ways to accomplish this.

**Targeted final report, *Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute* (Sager)**

Nycz and Remington presented their review of Dr. Sager’s final report for *Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute*. The project successfully developed systems of care promoting early recognition and treatment for those affected by Alzheimer’s disease. The project resulted in a nationally recognized statewide program to promote early diagnosis, treatment and support of patients and families affected by dementia disorders. The reviewers noted several important successes related to health policy, research infrastructure, benefits to patients and health care providers, and sustainability. MERC’s funding helped leverage a $6.5 million center grant from the National Institute on Aging. Nycz seconded a motion by Remington to accept the report. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. **Adjourn – next meeting April 12, 2010**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 6:10pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison