Members Present: Betty Chewning, Marc Drezner, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Craig Kent, Pat McBride, Paul Moberg, Rick Moss, Greg Nycz, Tom Oliver, Pat Remington

Members Absent: Robert Lemanske, Rod Welch

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. Discussion and decision on revised budget for Health Innovations Program 2009 targeted grant award

Moss presented an overview of the revised budget and proposal for the Health Innovation Program (HIP), originally funded with feedback from MERC in December 2009. At MERC’s request, Maureen Smith revised the proposal to include a new aim focused on dissemination. $225,000 ($75,000 per year) initially designated for hiring senior faculty has been reallocated in support of dissemination efforts. HIP will partner with the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality (WCHQ), a nationally recognized voluntary consortium of 28 provider and hospital organizations from around the state working to improve quality and cost-effectiveness of health care for the people of Wisconsin. HIP will work with UW faculty and WCHQ to jointly develop, test and assess dissemination and shared learning activities.

Oliver commented that the new aim is consistent with MERC’s request. He added that WCHQ is at the forefront of developing and implementing new health care standards and is an ideal partner to help advance the dissemination efforts. Chewning seconded a motion by Remington to approve the budget reallocation of $225,000 from faculty recruitment toward dissemination. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Announcements

Legislative Audit Bureau audit

Smith reported that the exit conference with the Legislative Audit Bureau to discuss the audit findings and recommendations is scheduled on April 16. Following the exit conference, WPP leadership and staff will compile a response which will amend the final audit report. It is expected that LAB will release the report in mid-May. At that time, WPP staff will distribute the report to members of the MERC and OAC.
Annual Conflict of Interest Questionnaire
Moss requested that committee members review the MERC Conflict of Interest policy and complete the related annual questionnaire. A University Outside Activities Report must be filed with the questionnaire.

Institutional Review Board presentation in June
Given the number of MERC grants requiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) review, Smith has asked Nichelle Cobb, Director of the Health Sciences IRB, to provide an update on the IRB process at the June 14 MERC meeting.

Procedures on reallocation of MERC awards by Principal Investigators for sub-awards
Moss reported that two grantees have allocated MERC funding for sub-awards. In order to ensure thorough oversight of the sub-awards, WPP leadership is developing a policy on the reallocation of MERC funding by Principal Investigators for sub-awards. A draft policy will be discussed at an upcoming MERC meeting.

4. Approval of March 8, 2010 draft minutes

Drezner seconded a motion by Nycz to approve the draft March 8, 2010 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) update

Nycz reported on the March 25, 2010 OAC meeting. OAC reviewed the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) Community Action Planning Grant proposals from the four targeted communities: Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee and Racine. After a presentation by Loraine Lathen, LIHF Program Leader, on the reviewers’ extensive comments and recommendations, the OAC funded the Racine Collaborative which received strong ratings by the reviewers in all categories, but delayed funding the Kenosha, Milwaukee and Beloit applications for further revisions. The revised proposals will be reviewed by OAC over the next few months, and will include presentations by the applicants.

6. MERC cash flow and financial projections

Mount presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through March 31, 2010. The projected value of the endowment is $304 million with a remaining cash balance of $23 million.

7. New Investigator Program 2010 Request for Proposals

Release of RFP and preliminary application on April 5
The New Investigator Program 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on April 5. This commenced the NIP’s sixth funding cycle. The new web-based preliminary application was also
made available on the WPP web site. In addition to compiling general information on the applicant and the project, the preliminary application includes a two-page project abstract and the applicant’s biographical sketch.

**Applicant information session on April 13**

An information session for interested applicants is scheduled on April 13. Eileen Smith will present a brief background on the WPP as well as highlights of the 2010 RFP. Rick Moss and Norm Drinkwater will be available to respond to questions.

**Procedure for evaluation of preliminary applications**

Preliminary applications are due on May 14. The applications will undergoing a technical review by WPP staff and in June and July MERC will review the preliminary applications to determine those that warrant further development as full applications. WPP staff will distribute the review assignments in June.

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

**Presentation of revised web-based interim progress and final reports**

The presentation of the revised web-based interim progress and final reports was deferred until a future meeting.

**Additional information on interim reports provided by Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP) grantees**

- *Individual Stroma-Targeting Therapy in Breast Cancer*

In February, MERC discussed and accepted an interim progress report for Andreas Friedl’s CHSP grant, *Individual Stroma-Targeting Therapy in Breast Cancer*. MERC inquired whether the collaborative grant application mentioned in the report had been successful. Dr. Friedl recently confirmed that a nanotechnology proposal building upon the MERC grant is under review.

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

In February, MERC discussed an interim progress report for Timothy Kamp’s CHSP grant, *Patient-Specific Induced-Pluripotent Stem Cell Models for Human Disease*. Although at that time acceptance of the report was deferred, MERC agreed that project is poised for rapid progress in the second year of funding. There was general agreement by MERC to accept the report as submitted.

- *Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin*

Discussion of the interim progress report for Gloria Sarto’s CHSP grant, *Reducing Infant Mortality in Wisconsin*, was deferred until a future meeting.
Targeted interim report: *Development of a Centralized UWCCC Biobank* (Yang)

Drezner and Kent presented their review of the interim report for David Yang’s Targeted grant, *Development of a Centralized UWCCC Biobank*. Overall, the project made progress during its second year. A charge-back system for bio-specimen requests was developed to help offset the financial cost of procuring and storing collected specimens. Also, a new Director, David Yang, and Co-Director, Bill Schelman, were appointed. However, the reviewers noted several concerns. Of particular concern was the suspension of IRB approval for a number of months due to non-compliance issues.

Since Dr. Yang is planning to request renewal of this award, Kent seconded a motion by Drezner to accept the interim report with the recommendation that the reapplication include a strategic or business plan covering expansion of the biobank, education of users, explanation of the chargeback system, including the plans to become self sustaining, and statistics on the use of the biobank. Additional information on the suspension of IRB will also be requested.

9. **Adjourn – next meeting June 14, 2010**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 6:40pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison