Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
May 11, 2009 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Betty Chewning, Paul DeLuca, Marc Drezner, Robert Lemanske, Pat McBride, Paul Moberg, Greg Nycz, Tom Oliver, Pat Remington, Rod Welch

Members Absent: Susan Goelzer, Craig Kent, Clive Svendsen

Guests: Javier Nieto, Christine Seibert

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

DeLuca called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

1. Announcements

Conflicts of Interest
WPP staff will follow-up with several committee members regarding submission of a UW-Madison Outside Activities Report which must be filed with the MERC Conflict of Interest Questionnaire.

My Webspace MERC Group Directory
WPP staff are working with the Division of Information Technology to establish a group directory in My WebSpace for MERC’s monthly meeting materials. My WebSpace is a web-accessible file storage system accessible to UW-Madison faculty, staff and students. A link to the MERC group directory will also be provided in the monthly confirmation emails.

Strategic Initiatives Reapplication Awards:
Smith reported that Dean Golden recently approved funding for two Strategic Initiatives Allocation reapplications:

Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State: David Kindig, MD, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Population Health Sciences, will receive $463,635 over three years – a 40% reduction from original award – to: (1) Develop an annual report on Wisconsin’s overall health, health disparity reduction, and progress on key health indicators in comparison to other states; (2) Enhance and disseminate the online Policy and Program Evidence Data Base; and (3) Enhance community engagement activities including collaboration with the development of the 2020 Wisconsin State Health Plan, integration with other UW Population Health Institute activities, and development of a more comprehensive statewide communications strategy.

Advancing Evidence-Based Health Policy in Wisconsin: Thomas Oliver, PhD, Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences, will receive $156,000 over three years – a 20% reduction from original award – with 100% matching funds from the UW Chancellor to: (1) Provide policymakers, in both the public and private sectors, with timely, nonpartisan,
information for evidence-based decision-making; and (2) Increase the involvement of UW faculty research and teaching activities in topical issues of state public policy.

2. Approval of April 13, 2009 minutes

Drezner moved approval of the April 13, 2009 minutes. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Oversight and Advisory Committee report

Nycz reported that the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) held a conference call on April 8, 2009. The OAC unanimously agreed to forward the name of Christine Holmes to the Board of Regents for appointment to the vacant public member position. Ms. Holmes is President and CEO of the Penfield Children’s Center in Milwaukee. She is an advocate for child health and well-being with nearly three decades of national leadership and advocacy experience in health and human services. Ms. Holmes’ appointment was unanimously approved by the Board of Regents on May 7, 2009.

Nycz also reported on other business related to no-cost extension requests for two implementation grants and a request from a 2007 development grantee to terminate the grant because of difficulty with implementation.

4. Overview of reapplication process for targeted grants and financial projections

Reapplication Process for Targeted Grants

Smith reported that two reapplications are being considered by MERC today: the Survey of the Health of Wisconsin and Transforming Medical Education: Integrating Public Health in the Curriculum. Both reapplications have undergone a technical review, including a non-supplanting review, as well as an external expert review. For each reapplication, two non-MERC reviewers with relevant expertise and experience germane to the project conducted an initial review of the detailed progress report and the grant application. The reviewers’ comments were made available to MERC along with the reapplication materials.

WPP Financial Projections

Mount presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through March 2009. The UW Foundation closed its books for the year ending December 31, 2008 and reported a 25% decrease in the value of the endowment. In the first quarter of 2009, UWF estimated an additional 4.5% decrease with a balance of $249 million, placing the endowment 13% under the floor of $281 million. Mount clarified that the losses do not impact the value of MERC’s spendable reserves of approximately $24 million. He reminded the committee that in order to meet existing obligations through calendar year 2010, current grants were reduced to 75% of the original annual award, and reapplication budgets must be proposed at 75% of the original award.
5. **Presentation, discussion and decision on reapplication for the *Survey of the Health of Wisconsin***

Javier Nieto, MD, MPH, Professor and Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences, presented an overview of the reapplication for the *Survey of the Health of Wisconsin*, including a progress report since inception. Dr. Nieto requested $4,119,675 over three years to maintain an infrastructure for population health research and applied public health investigation and policy development in the state of Wisconsin with the following aims: (1) Provide an infrastructure for ongoing and future health sciences research, in order to improve the health of Wisconsin residents, (2) Improve monitoring and enable promotion of health for all Wisconsin residents, and (3) Facilitate innovative and transformational population health research in Wisconsin.

6. **Presentation, discussion and decision on reapplication for *Transforming Medical Education: Integrating Public Health in the Curriculum* (30 min)**

Christine Seibert, MD, Associate Dean for Medical Education, presented an overview of the reapplication for *Transforming Medical Education: Integrating Public Health in the Curriculum*. Dr. Seibert requested $2,504,333 over three years to integrate public health, biomedical sciences and clinical medicine education across all four years of the medical school curriculum, culminating in the opportunity for each graduate to obtain a Public Health Certificate with the following aims: (1) Develop a longitudinal curriculum model that integrates public health competencies into all phases of the current four year UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) MD program, (2) Design and implement a faculty development program to prepare and support teachers for the new integrated curricular model, and (3) establish a Public Health Certificate program that would be offered to all SMPH students.

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

DeLuca asked members to indicate any conflicts of interest on the applications under consideration. The following two members indicated conflicts of interest on the *SHOW* proposal: Marc Drezner as the Senior Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, and Paul Moberg as a co-PI on a grant proposal related to SHOW being submitted to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. According to MERC’s conflict of interest policy, members with conflicts of interest are able to participate in the discussion of the proposal, but are not allowed to vote on the proposal.

Remington moved that the meeting be adjourned into closed session Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1) (c), (e) and (f) to make a recommendation concerning the awarding of
competitive targeted grants and to consider the faculty finalists to be invited to submit full applications for the competitive Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP). Lemanske seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

After considerable discussion of the competitive reapplications and the CHSP applications as well as the scores and comments of the expert reviewers, MERC unanimously agreed to return to open session. After returning to open session, MERC reaffirmed the following decisions made in closed session:

**Survey of the Health of Wisconsin:** MERC awarded $4,119,675 over three years to Javier Nieto for the *Survey of the Health of Wisconsin*.

**Transforming Medical Education: Integrating Public Health in the Curriculum:** Paul DeLuca and Eileen Smith will follow-up with Christine Seibert to share MERC’s feedback, which included a discussion of the MD-MPH degree, explaining the meaning of the certificate when implemented, clarifying the order of the aims of the project, developing a more detailed plan for the training and development of faculty, and budget questions. Dr. Seibert’s responses will be shared with MERC in June.

**Collaborative Health Sciences Program:** After a delay of a couple months due to the decline in the value of the endowment, MERC decided to move forward with the review process for the Collaborative Health Sciences Program. MERC decided to invite full applications from 10 of the 31 applicants who submitted preliminary applications, although only one project is likely to be funded in January 2010. The ten applicants will be notified of their status and of the intent of MERC to make only one grant award. Full applications will be due in August.

8. **Next meeting – June 8, 2009**

DeLuca indicated that the June agenda will include a reapplication presentation by Marc Drezner for the *Institute for Clinical and Translational Research*.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison