Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health (UW SMPH)
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
August 9, 2010 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Craig Kent, Pat McBride, Paul Moberg, Rick Moss, Greg Nycz, Pat Remington

Members Absent: Betty Chewning, Marc Drezner, Robert Lemanske, Tom Oliver, Rod Welch

Staff: Chris Blakey, Tonya Mathison, Mike Mirer, Eileen Smith, Karla Thompson

Guests: Dick Reynolds

1. Call meeting to order

Moss called the meeting to order at 5:15pm.

2. Announcements

Legislative Audit Bureau audit
Smith reported on the July 15 and August 9 meetings of the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, Inc. (WUHF). On July 15, WUHF met to hear a presentation of the LAB audit, to receive comments from the Insurance Commissioner, to seek the responses from the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (UW SMPH) to the audit report, and to provide a forum for public comments.

At the meeting earlier today (August 9), WUHF met with both schools to discuss, and to further clarify as necessary, the schools’ written responses to specific questions raised by WUHF following the July 15 meeting. The Insurance Commissioner also attended the meeting and spoke briefly indicating his interest in participating in further discussions. There was also a presentation by Rachel Currans-Sheehan from the Department of Health Services on new funding opportunities made available through federal health care reform. At the conclusion of the meeting, both schools were asked to present additional information to the WUHF Board.

Joint OAC/MERC strategic planning meeting, November 17
Smith reported that a joint strategic planning meeting of the MERC and the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) is scheduled on Wednesday, November 17, Noon-4:00pm, at the Fluno Center. The agenda for this meeting is under development and will be shared with MERC in October.

September MERC meeting rescheduled
Due to scheduling conflicts, Smith reported that the September 12 MERC meeting will be rescheduled as a conference call.
3. Approval of July 12, 2010 draft minutes

Kent seconded a motion by Nycz to approve the draft July 12, 2010 minutes. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Discussion and decision on revision to MERC conflict of interest policy

The Legislative Audit Bureau audit report included a recommendation that the UW SMPH and MCW clarify their respective conflict of interest policies. Moss reported that WPP leadership and staff will work with UW Legal Counsel to revise MERC and OAC’s current policies to accurately reflect the current practice of requiring members to be absent during discussion and voting. MERC will discuss revisions made to its conflict of interest policy in September. Once approved by MERC, the policy will be filed with the Insurance Commissioner, the WUHF and the Board of Regents.

5. New Investigator Program

Invitations to submit full applications

Drinkwater seconded a motion by Nycz to formally accept a decision made by MERC’s Chair (Moss), in consultation with the Chair of the New Investigator Program (NIP) Review Subcommittee (Drinkwater) and the WPP Director (Smith), to extend invitations to four additional top-ranked applicants– for a total of 18. This addition is in alignment with the discussion of the applicants at the July meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Full applications are due in September, and will undergo expert review. MERC will make up to three awards following interviews of the finalists in December.

Full grant application training session

Maureen Smith, MD, PhD, MPH, led a special training session for applicants invited to submit full applications. Following a brief overview by WPP staff of the NIP application instructions and requirements, Dr. Smith presented the critical elements of a competitive proposal, tailored to the specific requirements of the NIP. During an optional third session, applicants reviewed actual grant abstracts and participated in interactive critiques.

6. Interim progress and final reports:

Additional information on 2008 Collaborative Health Sciences Program award, Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin (Sarto)

In response to issues raised by a collaborative partner on the 2008 Collaborative Health Sciences Program grant, Reducing Infant Mortality Disparities in Wisconsin, there was general agreement by MERC to include a new section in the Memorandum of Understanding on “resolution of disputes”. MERC also considered requiring collaborative partners to sign the annual grant progress reports, or to require a partnership agreement outlining the responsibilities and accountabilities of each partner.


**Review assignments for September**

Smith reported that there are a number of interim and final progress reports requiring review. In September, each report will be assigned to two MERC members who will present their reviews to MERC in October.

7. **Oversight and Advisory Committee report**

Nycz reported on the July 21, 2010 OAC meeting. Drs. David Allen and Aaron Carrel from the UW SMPH Department of Pediatrics presented the mission and goals of the Wisconsin Prevention of Obesity and Diabetes (WiPOD). The presentation included opportunities for OAC to engage WiPOD around advancing OAC’s targeted initiative promoting healthy weight, physical activity, good nutrition, and reducing incidence and severity of overweight and obesity. At the strategic planning meeting, OAC and MERC will consider the appropriate leadership needed to bring partners together to significantly impact Wisconsin’s obesity epidemic.

As part of a regular update on the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF), Phil Farrell reported that the WPP and LIHF leadership recently met with the UW Foundation to discuss fundraising opportunities for LIHF. He also reported that the Wisconsin State Legislature convened a Legislative Council Special Committee on infant mortality. In addition, Lorraine Lathen, LIHF Project Leader, reported on the June 28 LIHF Wingspread Conference. The conference included participants from all four LIHF communities, Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee and Racine.

The WPP received 110 Notices of Intent (NOI) for the 2010 cycle of the Community-Academic Partnership Fund. The NOI Review subcommittee, made up of experts and OAC members, is currently reviewing each NOI to determine if it warrants further development as a full application. The Review subcommittee will present its recommendations to OAC in August.

8. **MERC cash flow and financial projections**

The presentation on MERC’s cash flow and financial projections was deferred until October.

9. **Adjournment-Closed Session:** Pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1) (c), (e) and (f) to make a decision concerning the awarding of targeted competitive grant for Development of a Centralized UWSMPH BioBank.

McBride seconded a motion by Nycz to adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1) (c), (e) and (f) to make a decision concerning the awarding of a targeted grant for Development of a Centralized UWSMPH BioBank. The motion was unanimously approved.

Following thorough discussion of a recent meeting of WPP leadership with BioBank staff sharing MERC’s advice and guidance to the program with the objective of ensuring that MERC’s expectations will be achieved as much as possible, Nycz seconded a motion by Drinkwater to return to open session. The motion was unanimously approved.
Remington seconded a motion by Kent to reaffirm the motion made in closed session to fund *Development of a Centralized UWSMPH BioBank* for $168,790 for one year. The Biobank must reapply to seek funding for a second year. The motion was unanimously approved. BioBank staff will be developing a long-range business plan which will be presented to MERC in a few months.

10. **Adjourn – September meeting to be rescheduled.**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison