Minutes
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee (MERC)
September 14, 2009 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

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

Members Absent: Marc Drezner, Susan Goelzer, Greg Nycz

Guests: Bruce Klein

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

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

2. Announcements

Welcome new members
Dean Golden appointed two new members to MERC to fill unexpired terms. Rick Moss, Senior Associate Dean for Basic Research, Biotechnology and Graduate Studies, replaces Paul DeLuca as Chair. Norm Drinkwater, Professor of Oncology, replaces Clive Svendsen as a Basic Sciences Faculty representative.

Strategic reapplication award for Recruitment of Middle-Aged African American For Studies of Pre-Clinical Alzheimer’s Disease: Development of a Minority Recruitment Model in Milwaukee
This is a joint award from the Dean’s Strategic Allocation, ICTR, and CUPH in the amount of $579,543 over three years to Mark Sager, Director of the Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute, for Recruitment of Middle-Aged African-Americans for Studies of Pre-Clinical Alzheimer’s Disease: Development of a Minority Recruitment Model in Milwaukee. This project, originally funded in 2008, will continue its work by expanding the Wisconsin Registry for Alzheimer’s Prevention recruitment and baseline testing to include adult children of African-Americans with Alzheimer's disease living in Milwaukee County. In addition, the project will expand its development of a model of minority recruitment that can be used by UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) researchers for facilitating minority participation in future research studies.

Review of 2008 Annual Report by WUHF and Board of Regents
The Wisconsin Partnership Program 2008 Annual Report was successfully reviewed by both the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, Inc. (WUHF) and the UW System Board of Regents in September.
**WPP programmatic and financial audits**

The financial audits of the WPP and the UW Foundation by the Legislative Audit Bureau and Grant Thornton respectively concluded in August and resulted in an unqualified opinion without recommendations. The reports along with a cover letter with background information were delivered to the Insurance Commissioner. Copies were also sent to WUHF and the UW System Board of Regents.

**Assessment of WPP operational systems by Dick Reynolds**

Smith reported that with the conclusion of the initial Five-Year Plan in March 2009, the WPP has reached a point in growth and complexity where an assessment of its current operations is necessary to ensure the continued and effective expansion of its activities. Dick Reynolds, an expert on process improvement and organizational development, will be conducting a comprehensive analysis of the WPP’s operational systems with an emphasis on financial monitoring and grant management to evaluate their adequacy and responsiveness to meet the needs of WPP’s internal and external stakeholders.

**Collaborative Health Sciences Program**

Seven of the ten SMPH faculty invited submitted full Collaborative Health Sciences Program applications. Rick Moss and Norm Drinkwater, chair of the Application Review Subcommittee, assigned two reviewers, a primary and secondary, to each application. The reviewers were identified based on their expertise and potential interest in the subject matter of the proposal. Reviewers are working independently followed by a full Review Subcommittee discussion on October 19. The outcome of the meeting will be a ranked list of the applications to be forwarded to MERC for the final phase of the review process. MERC will interview finalists in January 2010.

**2010 MERC meeting schedule**

The 2010 MERC meeting schedule was distributed. Meetings will continue to take place on the second Monday of each month, 5-7pm.

**3. Approval of July 13, 2009 draft minutes**

Remington moved approval of the draft July 13, 2009 minutes. Lemanske seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**4. Oversight and Advisory Committee report**

Smith provided an overview of several important upcoming OAC events and activities related to the Healthy Birth Outcomes Initiative, recently renamed the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF). On September 16, the OAC will review a final copy of the Community Action Planning grant Request for Proposals (RFP) developed by the LIHF Steering Committee. It is expected that the RFP will be released on September 21 for targeted communities in
Milwaukee, Racine, Beloit and Kenosha. Applicants will use funds to develop a MCH Life-course Collaborative and create an action plan to reduce health disparities within the community.

Lorraine Lathen, former member of OAC and expert on this topic, has taken on the role of Project Leader of the LIHF and will provide the OAC and the Steering Committee with guidance and advice necessary to develop the LIHF during the planning phase.

An event is being held by the UW Foundation on September 17 at Discovery World focused on the work of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health in Milwaukee. The event will feature the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families.

The OAC is developing recommendations for priority setting for future investments. David Kindig, Helene Nelson and Bridget Booske are leading a work group focused on identifying a smaller number of potential priorities for consideration by OAC. Moss is participating with a focus on OAC/MERC collaborations.

5. MERC interim report presentation on 2008 targeted grant: Wisconsin Center for Infectious Diseases (WisCID)

Bruce Klein, MD, presented an interim progress report on the 2008 targeted grant, Wisconsin Center for Infectious Diseases (WisCID). WisCID is establishing a center that addresses microbiological areas of public health importance in an interdisciplinary fashion, emphasizing research and training, with the goal of translating discoveries into new therapies and preventive measures against infectious disease. In its first year, WisCID established administrative support, brought together the center scientific leadership to agree to short- and long-term plans, created an NIH funded training program, encouraged and supported the development of research in targeted areas, and created a website.

Following the presentation, Klein clarified that the outcome of the retreat in March 2008 was identification of the five targeted areas, namely, drug discovery, immunity/inflammation, symbiosis and probiotics, translational research, and epidemiology. Klein stressed the need for incentives to bring investigators together to advance these targeted areas. Remington noted that the epidemiology area has no leader. Welch responded that ongoing faculty recruitments will likely result in the hiring of three faculty in the area of infectious disease.

Klein and Welch, who has a conflict of interest as co-PI on WisCID, left the room. Moss asked for further discussion. Norm Drinkwater and Rob Lemanske presented their reviews of the WisCID interim progress report. MERC agreed that despite a slow start, good progress has been made toward achieving the aims of the project. There was general support for the reallocation of core funds to provide seed funding for the targeted areas. A formal request must be submitted by Dr. Klein. Drinkwater moved acceptance of the report with a recommendation of building efforts in the area of epidemiology and global health. The motion was seconded by Lemanske and was approved by 9 of 10 members. Welch did not vote.
6. MERC cash flow and financial projections

Mount presented the financial projections for the Wisconsin Partnership Program through August 2009. He emphasized that the projected value of the endowment of $285 million is over $3 million above the original gift. MERC’s spendable reserves are projected at over $18 million. Given the 2009 Senate Bill 31 related to the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds law, MERC will have strategic discussions over the next couple of meetings on policy related to future distributions from the endowment.

Survey of the Health of Wisconsin budget revisions

Mount reported that the new award for the Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW) was increased by $19,719 to cover the associated salary and fringe benefits for the notice period for personnel laid-off due to MERC’s required budget reductions. In addition, the duration of the new grant was also shortened by four months.

7. Discussion and decision on no cost extension requests

A New Diagnostic Test to Monitor Regression and Recurrence of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer

MERC discussed a no cost extension request from Manish Patankar for $42,062 over one year for the 2007 New Investigator Program grant, "A New Diagnostic Test to Monitor Regression and Recurrence of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer". After noting the statement in the request that personnel are now in place and appropriate blood samples are available, Oliver made a motion to grant a 6 month extension for the project with a reduction of 25% of the remaining balance. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Falls risk detection and gait instabilities in older adults

MERC discussed a no cost extension request from Bryan Heiderscheit for $26,822 over one year for the 2007 New Investigator Program grant, "Falls Risk Detection and Gait Instabilities". After noting that Dr. Heiderscheit is close to completing the project, namely the completion of data analysis, Drinkwater made a motion to grant a six month extension of the remaining balance. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Probiotics for prevention of infection by multiresistant bacteria

MERC discussed a no cost extension request from Nasia Safdar for $76,142 over one year for the 2007 New Investigator Program grant, "Probiotics for Prevention of Infection by Multi-Resistant Bacteria". In general, there was concern by MERC about Dr. Safdar’s progress in achieving the aims of this project. To date, the PI has spent approximately $26,000, which is a very low expenditure for an award in the amount of $100,000 that was expected to conclude in October, 2009. Consequently, Lemanske made a motion to grant a 12 month extension in the amount of $25,000 to enable Safdar to accomplish goal #1: "To refine the methodology of a randomized controlled trial to determine the effect of VSL #3 vs. placebo in eradicating
intestinal colonization by MRSA and VRE and nasal colonization by MRSA”. Drinkwater seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

8. Review of grantee interim progress and final reports

_Integrating Variation at Single Nucleotides and Short Tandem Repeats to Identify Genetic Associations with Complex Disease_

Norm Drinkwater and Rod Welch presented an overview of the final report for Bret Payseur’s 2006 New Investigator Program grant, _Integrating Variation at Single Nucleotides and Short Tandem Repeats to Identify Genetic Associations with Complex Disease_. There was general agreement by MERC that the project was highly successful and met its goals. Dr. Payseur successfully gathered the preliminary data to compete successfully for a five-year NIH R01 grant from the National Human Genome Institute, expanding the work of the MERC-funded project. The project also resulted in two publications and a pending submission as well as two international presentations. Drinkwater made a motion to accept the report with a request that Dr. Payseur revise the concise summary so as to be understood by the general public. Kent seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

_Wnt/Frizzled Signals in Normal and Malignant Lymphoid Development_

Norm Drinkwater and Rick Moss presented an overview of the final report for Erik Ranheim’s 2005 New Investigator Program grant, _Wnt/Frizzled Signals in Normal and Malignant Lymphoid Development_. There was general agreement by MERC that the project was successful and the goals were achieved. Leveraging of the MERC grant was excellent with the securing of awards from two foundations as well as plans for applications to the NIH and ACS, all to further the translational aspects of the award. The project results were published in _Blood_ and presented at the 2007 American Society of Hematology meeting. Drinkwater’s motion to accept the report was unanimously approved following Kent’s second.

_Mechanisms of CREB function and regulation in response to DNA damage_

Rick Moss and Rod Welch presented an overview of the final report for Randal Tibbetts’ 2005 New Investigator Program grant, _Mechanisms of CREB function and regulation in response to DNA damage_. MERC agreed that overall Dr. Tibbetts delivered on the studies proposed in the original application. Dr. Tibbetts’ greatest success was related to the second aim of generating a mouse strain with a CREB mutant knock-in gene. His work resulted in three publications and helped to leverage funding from a NIH R01 grant. Welch made a motion to accept the report with a request that Dr. Tibbetts’ provide MERC the following: (1) plans in the event that no significant phenotypes are observed with the mouse construct, (2) update on R01 renewal and the significance of the mouse construct in that proposal, and (3) update on publications. He added that the summary must be revised for a general public audience. Remington seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.
**Library Collection Support for Public Health Research and Teaching**

Tom Oliver and Pat Remington presented an overview of the final report for Julie Schneider’s 2005 strategic grant, *Library Collection Support for Public Health Research and Teaching*. MERC agreed that overall the project has been very successful in achieving its goal of identifying, purchasing and making available books and journals in the area of public health for education and research at the School of Medicine and Public Health. The reviewers noted that subscriptions have been maintained to nearly 95% of the top journals in public and population health based on the Journal Citation Report and that nearly 100% of the top book titles identified in Doody’s Core Titles list have been purchased. Also, the conversion of most of the resources to electronic format has increased access of journals to UW faculty, students, staff and citizens through resource-sharing services.

Oliver moved acceptance of the report with a recommendation that efforts are made to communicate to stakeholders the development and availability of these resources. He also wanted clarification by Schneider of how this expansion will be maintained in the future without MERC funding. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine**

Pat McBride and Pat Remington presented an overview of the interim progress report for Byron Crouse’s 2007 targeted grant for the *Wisconsin Academy of Rural Medicine (WARM)*. There was general agreement by MERC that WARM is a very visible and successful project for the School and for the state of Wisconsin. The reviewers noted a 48% increase in applications to the program with a 45% acceptance rate with 18 of 40 applicants being admitted. Although everything possible is being done to ensure WARM’s success, the reviewers noted the ongoing challenge of implementation at the sites – Marshfield, La Crosse, and Green Bay. Continued strong statewide campus support is needed. Lemanske moved acceptance of the report with a request that Dr. Crouse’s progress report presentation to MERC in December include: (1) explanation of the goal rate of acceptance and how the acceptance rate of WARM compares to that of the regular medical school class, (2) update on implementation of clerkships at all sites, including implementation at the new Marshfield site, and (3) framework of program evaluation, including a description of benchmarks for success. McBride seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

**Health Innovations Program**

Pat Remington presented an overview of the interim progress report for Maureen Smith’s 2005 targeted grant for the *Health Innovations Program (HIP)*. MERC agreed that HIP has made acceptable progress towards its goal of building a national model of excellence in innovative health services research. HIP has been very active and successful at acquiring grants. Remington noted that HIP’s work is closely integrated with the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Community Academic Partnerships (ICTR CAP) core. Strategic planning by MERC in the next couple of months will include consideration of the need for a critical mass of senior faculty in health service research faculty with interest in clinical care.
Remington moved acceptance of the report with a request that Dr. Smith’s reapplication for HIP in December include: (1) explanation of the connection of HIP with ICTR-CAP, (2) suggestions for MERC and the School’s consideration of faculty expansion in health services research, (3) description of how HIP will bridge clinical and population health departments. Drinkwater seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

9. **Adjourn – Next meeting October 12, 2009**

Moss adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison