Minutes

UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee
5:00 PM March 25, 2008 – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present:  Bill Busse, Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Cindy Haq, Greg Nycz, Rick Moss, Patrick Remington, Mary Beth Plane, Gordon Ridley, Susan Skochelak, Rod Welch, George Wilding

Members Absent:  Sanjay Asthana, Jeff Grossman, Javier Nieto, Jeff Stearns

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

The Committee was called to order by Chair Paul DeLuca at 5:09 p.m.

1.  Announcements:  a. Eileen Smith reminded the group that the April 14 MERC meeting starts at 3:00 instead of 5:00.

b.  DeLuca reported that the Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP) process is moving forward.  21 applicants have been invited to submit full proposals, which are due April 18.  The subcommittee that reviewed the preliminary applications has made suggestions regarding reviewers for the full applications.  Those faculty are being contacted to ask for their participation.

c.  Smith announced that the WPP has hired two new staff members:  Shannon Sparks is the new Program Officer, and Phil Davis is a Public Affairs Specialist.

d.  Smith reported that she and Dean Golden met with the Insurance Commissioner to present the SMPH’s nominees to the WUHF board.  Katharine Lyall (former UW System president) and Jim Nellen (corporate lawyer) will replace former members replace George Steil and Bob Froehlke.

e.  Smith provided an update on the WPP Evaluation process.  The Evaluation Sub-Committee is seeking input from internal and external audiences through stakeholder interviews conducted by the Survey Research Center.  Additionally, a written survey will soon be sent by email to all SMPH faculty and academic staff.  She encouraged MERC members to respond to the survey.

2.  Annual Report Outline:  Smith presented an outline for the WPP 2007 Annual Report.  The format follows past outlines.  The document may be a bit shorter than in past years.  Smith stated that we will have a first draft of the report for review in April or May.  There being no discussion, MERC approved the outline unanimously.

3.  Strategic Plan:  a.  Review Charge:  DeLuca reminded the group of the activities that have taken place to date in the development of the next Five Year Plan.  A timeline and an outline for
the Five Year Plan were created. MERC held a Strategic Planning Retreat in September; the participants’ suggestions were summarized into an Overview and Outcomes document. MERC then formed three subcommittees charged with prioritizing the items in the Overview and Outcomes document.

Those subcommittees—Research, Education, and Community Engagement—have completed their work, and have submitted documents explaining their priorities. MERC must now merge the results of the three subcommittees into one cohesive document to guide the next Five Year Plan. DeLuca suggested that the chair of each subcommittee present their findings.

b. Subcommittee Presentations:
   1. Education. Sue Skochelak reviewed the five goals and guiding principles developed by the subcommittee, and outlined three program priorities and initiatives, which include Innovative Education Initiatives, Faculty Development, and Linking Education and Service.

   2. Research. DeLuca stated that the subcommittee embraced an overarching goal of supporting the full spectrum of research and maintaining a balanced portfolio. He outlined a number of specific Research Initiatives including competitive grant awards, Faculty Recruitments, and Infrastructure Development.

   3. Community Engagement. Cindy Haq described the process by which this subcommittee agreed to change their name from “Service / Outreach” to more accurately reflect the desire to strengthen community engagement. She outlined three major community engagement initiatives, including Faculty Recruitment and Development, Support and Expansion of Community-based Intervention Research, and Support and Expansion of Community Engaged Education.

c. Discussion: A document summarizing the overlapping goals of the three subcommittees was circulated. DeLuca asked if there were any specific questions for the subcommittees. Nycz suggested that the Research subcommittee include the word “cure” in their overarching goal, along with prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease. Molly Carnes asked for a clarification of terminology regarding “community-based participatory research” (CBPR) versus “community-based research.” Pat Remington explained that CBPR is a subset of community-based research. It is our goal to include all types of community-based research, so we will use the more inclusive term. Gordon Ridley asked about the plans for the future of existing MERC-funded programs, and DeLuca explained that those programs must be evaluated as indicated in the last paragraph of the Research priorities document.

Bill Busse asked about development of program-project initiative, and DeLuca noted that it was included in the paragraph describing expansion of the CHSP. DeLuca added that such efforts might not be accessible to education programs, but Busse said that program-projects could develop the mechanism to educate trainees by bringing together established clinicians and researchers. Skochelak agreed with DeLuca that program-project grants don’t lend themselves to educational initiatives. She stated that the Educational Advisory Council would be the mechanism to provide advice and guidance to the full spectrum of educational proposals, including review of faculty development proposals related to education.
Norm Drinkwater commented that the Education document provided a lot of information about issues related to training of health care students, but did not give many details on training graduate students. He added that there are some fundamental issues on how we train scientists that should be considered. Skochelak indicated that the oversight may reflect the membership of the subcommittee, and added that those changes could be incorporated now. Moss noted that the Education Subcommittee discussed both focused Masters’ degrees for graduate students, in such areas as Biotechnology or Clinical Research, and also suggested a mechanism for certificate programs for post-docs to allow formal training in a subdiscipline apart from their lab research. Carnes suggested including a program to allow medical residents to obtain an MPH or MS in clinical research during their residency training.

Drinkwater suggested that we should find ways to ensure that MERC is not sole funder of the MPH program. Carnes stated that MERC may want to continue to support innovations in the MPH going forward, and Drinkwater agreed, but added that core funding for the MPH should come from the school. Skochelak, Remington and others had a brief discussion about how that goal could be achieved.

Rick Moss spoke in favor of using the program-project grant structure to promote interdisciplinarity, and added that as we develop more infrastructures, we might require research core facilities to support the infrastructure. DeLuca said that development of cores would evolve related to MERC’s needs.

Mary Beth Plane asked for clarification of who would set the priorities for strategic hires, and DeLuca said that would be the job of the Research Advisory Council. Plane noted that the Community Engagement Subcommittee document includes specific recommendations for faculty hires, and MERC’s priorities could be different from those of the Research Advisory Council. A number of members felt strongly that if MERC is providing funding for the hires, MERC should get to choose the priorities for those hires. DeLuca reminded the group that faculty hires need to be aligned with the missions of departments or centers. This lead to a lengthy discussion of the appropriate mechanism and structure for hiring faculty, including enumeration of the pros and cons of hiring through a center or institute. DeLuca noted that any organizing structure must have the ability to make faculty appointments, which is currently limited to departments.

Remington responded that we have to provide incentives for departments to make appointments in these strategic areas. Haq said that our goal is to get all SMPH departments engaged in community health, which will require both incentives to get people involved and strong leadership. She added that in order to recruit faculty, we need to couple strategic hires to transformation.

DeLuca summarized the discussion, saying that our goal is to affect transformation of the school by building faculty strengths in areas we don’t currently have. We will work to find the appropriate structure to make faculty appointments for positions that are funded by MERC.

George Wilding noted that the Community Engagement document does not include the UWCCC, which focuses on a number of statewide and minority issues. Additionally, the Cancer
Center has a mandate to do Cancer Control, which includes community outreach, addressing disparities, and other topics. Haq agreed to add the UWCCC to the document.

DeLuca asked if there were any other omissions in the three documents. Moss asked about the membership of MERC, especially with regards to the Focus Leaders. DeLuca said that we may need to revisit the MERC’s composition in the next Five Year Plan, as our needs have changed from initial start-up to on-going committee activities. Drinkwater added that it brings up the larger issue of governance. Smith clarified that MERC’s composition was not required by the Insurance Commissioner’s Order, but was detailed in the first Five Year Plan. Therefore, we can make changes for the next Five Year Plan. Susan Goelzer suggested that the elimination of focus leaders might make compliance with our Conflict of Interest policy more straightforward.

DeLuca asked Karla Thompson to provide a brief financial status report. Thompson circulated a spreadsheet with numbers updated through December 31, 2007. She explained that the first column represents the $30M startup funds, which must be spent by the end of 2008. The second column is unspent interest income; any funds left at the end of each year get added to our cash reserves, which can be used only once. The third column is the endowment, which cannot be spent. The document includes budget projections through 2009.

Thompson explained that the second page of the handout lists the yearly costs of projects which could be ongoing. This list will change depending on what programs are continued in the next Five Year Plan. The final page of the handout lists projects which have already ended or have end dates in the near future.

Busse asked what is left to spend, and Thompson said that we have $29M available for one-time use, and an annual budget of approximately $12-13M. Goelzer noted that the annual budget is based on a distribution of 4.25% from the UW Foundation. OAC will be asking the Foundation to consider increasing the distribution rate to 5%, which would therefore raise the annual income for MERC.

Moss asked about the next steps, and DeLuca said that we would make the necessary amendments to the subcommittee reports, and integrate the three documents into a single plan.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tracy L. Cabot, Recorder