Minutes

UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee
May 12, 2008 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Sanjay Asthana, Bill Busse, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Jeff Grossman, Cindy Haq, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Patrick Remington, Gordon Ridley, Susan Skochelak, Jeff Stearns, Rod Welch, George Wilding

Members Absent: Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Mary Beth Plane

Guests: Jim Cleary, Mark Drezner

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

DeLuca called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

1. Approval of April 14, 2008 minutes

Skochelak moved approval of the April 14, 2008 minutes. Nycz seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements

Smith announced that two of the 21 applicants who were invited to submit full Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP) applications withdrew. The CHSP Review Subcommittee assigned each full application to two reviewers who were selected based on the expertise required by the content and objectives of the proposal. In June, MERC will review the results and determine the finalists to be interviewed.

DeLuca plans to meet with Jeff Walker to discuss MERC’s feedback regarding Walker’s recent progress report presentation on the Human Proteomics Program.

Smith reported that the joint OAC/MERC meeting originally scheduled in May will take place on June 18. This will ensure ample time for the UW Survey Center and Program staff to analyze the results of the interviews, the public survey, and the community forums. The results, which are meant to help inform the development of the next Five Year Plan, will be presented for discussion at the joint meeting. In addition, OAC will present its advice and comment on MERC expenditures in accordance with the requirements of the Insurance Commissioner's Order.

DeLuca reported that the terms of nine MERC members expire in June, 2008. He recommended extending their terms in order avoid turnover on the committee during the five year planning process.
Remington moved to extend the membership terms of the nine members through January 1, 2009. Grossman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Busse noted that it would be difficult to orient new members while the Five Year Plan is being developed. Haq added that MERC should consider making member terms longer since the learning curve of new members is so steep. Smith noted that the composition of MERC will be reviewed during the five year planning process.

Frey announced that the Wisconsin Partnership Program is joining with the Johnson Foundation and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) to host a two-day conference at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, WI on May 22 and 23. The conference – entitled “The Wisconsin Infant Mortality Summit” – will convene state and national experts to discuss infant mortality and create a coalition of partners to support an action plan for improving birth outcomes among African American women in Wisconsin.

DeLuca encouraged members to attend the SHOW Research Symposium on May 14. The goal of the symposium is to explain SHOW in the context of population health research and to explore its potential contributions to the health of state residents. Experts will share their experiences in using data collected by population health surveys like SHOW.

DeLuca announced that James Thomson, PhD, Professor in the Department of Anatomy, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his distinguished achievements and ongoing contributions to original research.

3. **MERC Executive Subcommittee report**

Grossman reported that the Executive Subcommittee supports Dean Golden’s decision to provide $97,344 in supplemental funding from the Strategic Fund for *Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State* for the period September 1, 2008 to February 28, 2009. The supplemental funding along with an extension request from the initial award will be used to encourage use of the results across the state. This will allow Program staff to: 1) engage various stakeholders across the state in a community engagement process, 2) provide consultation and technical assistance to the State Health Plan 2020 planning process, 3) plan and provide leadership for a January 2009 conference, 4) provide ongoing consultation to the WPP five year planning process, and 5) produce a final report including all project deliverables as well as the reactions and conclusions from the community engagement process.

Grossman indicated that the remaining topics discussed at the May Executive Subcommittee meeting, including the interim progress reports, changes to the 2008 New Investigator Program RFP, and the reapplication process, will be covered later during today’s meeting.
4. Interim progress report presentations

**Institute for Clinical and Translational Research**

Marc Drezner, MD, presented a revised interim progress report on *Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR)*. There being no questions, Drezner left the room.

There was general agreement that Drezner’s financial overview clarified MERC’s distribution of the funding and the current status of the expenditures. Drinkwater recommended that future presentations include an overview of both the financial information and the accomplishments toward reaching ICTR’s goals and objectives. The presentation can focus on highlights related to MERC’s support.

**Reducing Cancer Disparities through Comprehensive Cancer Control**

Jim Cleary, MD, presented an interim progress report on *Reducing Cancer Disparities through Comprehensive Cancer Control*. Busse commented that the project has been very successful at engaging communities. He was concerned that cancer control is a broad topic, and questioned how project leaders plan to focus their efforts in order to ensure a long-term impact. Cleary responded that focus depends on future sources of funding. He added that it is important to engage additional partners within the context of the broader mission of Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Control Plan. Busse noted that accomplishments can be compromised due to the broadness of the Plan’s mission. Cleary replied that there is an underlying strategy of funding smaller seed projects to ensure such focus.

Wilding asked when the next Plan will be developed. Cleary indicated that the planning process has begun. The plan will be developed in partnership with the community and with this and other UW campuses, and it will include clear objectives for each section. Nycz commented on the extent of the project’s collaboration with a number of tribes, but wondered why the Menominee tribe was not involved. Cleary replied that the Menominee tribe is using funding from the UW Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention to address smoking cessation and lung cancer rates in the tribe. Haq questioned if additional MERC funding will be required to support future programmatic efforts. Cleary responded that MERC has an opportunity to leverage a five-year commitment by the state. Other sources of funding will be sought too.

There being no further questions, Cleary left the room.

Nycz commented that MERC’s investment contributed to the leveraging of over $3.2M in support from the Division of Public Health, UW Comprehensive Cancer Center (UW CCC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Busse indicated that it was difficult to attain the goals and anticipated outcomes of the project; i.e. how to determine that cancer control has been achieved. Wilding added that much of the Plan includes establishing infrastructure and developing connections with communities. Wilding added that the Plan lists a number of benchmarks, each with measurable outcomes.
Remington was concerned that there is a lack of faculty interested in using this project’s research infrastructure. In addition, he noted the project’s lack of competitiveness in leveraging peer reviewed funding. He sees outcomes related to community engagement and putting practices into place. Remington added that with a focus on quality improvement and measurable outcomes, this is a good opportunity for leveraging MERC funding. Nycz commented that the project helps to integrate transformation of the school into the UW CCC workflow.

5. Discussion and decision on 2008 New Investigator Program Request for Proposals

Drinkwater reported that the Executive Subcommittee recommended separating the review criteria for the New Investigator Program RFP into two groups:

**Primary review criteria:** All applicants are required to address the primary review criteria.
- The project advances the Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles of the Wisconsin Partnership Program.
- The project is innovative and has outstanding merit.
- The project appears feasible with a potential for acquisition or application of useful data.
- The project has the potential to advance the career development of the applicant.
- The project describes the process by which successful execution of this research or education intervention could be translated into improved health of the people of Wisconsin.

**Secondary review criteria:** If applicable, applicants may also address the secondary review criteria.
- The project has a leveraging effect and is likely to lead to extramural grant support.
- The project enhances interdisciplinary research or education and fosters collaborations between basic, clinical and population health scientists.
- The project engages communities.

Nycz moved approval of the 2008 New Investigator Program RFP. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. The RFP, which is web-based, will be released on June 2.


**Strategic Plan Subcommittee reports and overview**
Goelzer presented an overview of OAC’s recommendations for the MERC Strategic Plan Subcommittee reports:
Education:

- Support development of a distance-based MPH program.
- Encourage MERC to consider the “continuum of education” and to support Education Subcommittee’s suggestion to “seek collaborative relationships with OAC and communities to advance the education of the next generation of public health and health care professionals.”
- Does the Insurance Commissioner’s Order permit funding of education other than medical education and MPH program?
- Change title of section III to “Link Education with Community Service”

Research:

- Clarify future support of infrastructure grants, i.e., will renewals be limited in number of years with the goal of sustainability? Consider a maximum of 10 years of MERC support. Provide continued funding to only those infrastructure grants that clearly support the mission, vision and goals of the WPP and that have a plan for translating results into improved health in communities.
- Incorporate new, cutting edge concept of “implementation science”.
- Clarify requirements of parallel competitive process to CHSP. Does every proposal have to leverage NIH funds? What about foundations and other agencies like CDC or AHRQ?

Community Engagement:

- Develop a core community engagement initiative focused on the dissemination of research findings for practice application in the community.
- Include a definition of “community” that is comprehensive and inclusive of individuals and groups such as health care leaders, community health workers, non-profit leaders, legislators, and other public and private public health policy-makers.
- The term “service” as used in the document, needs a definition explaining all of its components.
- Community engagement needs a coordination mechanism - such as a Center - to ensure implementation of all its components, including community-based research, technical assistance, program planning and evaluation services.

DeLuca recommended that a Subcommittee of MERC further revise the potential initiatives and categories of funding for the 2009-2014 Five Year Plan based on the MERC Strategic Plan Subcommittee reports and overview as well as OAC’s recommendations. The Subcommittee will be made up of Busse, DeLuca, Drinkwater, Goelzer, Haq, Remington, and Skochelak. With the help of WPP staff, the Subcommittee will develop a draft of the MERC section of the 2009-2014 Five Year Plan for review by MERC.
Reapplication process for infrastructure grants
DeLuca reported that the latest draft of the reapplication process for infrastructure grants reflects recommendations made by MERC in April. Goelzer moved approval of the reapplication process for infrastructure grants. Nieto was concerned about the three year limit. DeLuca responded that it is important to ensure ample time to evaluate the renewed programs during the next five year plan. Drinkwater seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

7. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) report
Goelzer reported that in April the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) met jointly with the Public Health Education and Training Subcommittee (PHET). The PHET Subcommittee – formed by OAC in 2004 – provides recommendations to the OAC on the development of education and training programs in population health. For the first Five-Year Plan, OAC funded $3.5M for the development and implementation of three PHET initiatives: 1) Wisconsin Population Health Fellowship Program, 2) Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute, and 3) Continuing Public Health Education.

Following cumulative progress report presentations by Program staff, the OAC and PHET Subcommittee had a strategic discussion of the scope and nature of the programs, recommended changes, expected outcomes, new initiatives, and PHET’s future role.

8. Wisconsin Partnership Program Evaluation Implementation Committee report
Goelzer provided an overview of the April 23 WPP Evaluation Implementation Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed the evaluation focus area “Advancing the Public Health System”, which seeks to understand how the program is supporting and advancing the capacity of Wisconsin’s public health system through the State Health Plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010. The subcommittee invited Tom Sieger, Deputy Director of the Wisconsin Division of Public Health to provide a historical overview of the State Health Plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010, and to answer questions about the development of the 2020 plan.

Cathy Frey presented preliminary findings and data collection methods for the program’s alignment with state health plan priorities. The UW Survey center presented preliminary findings from the key informant interviews related to the state health plan. The interviews serve to inform the program in multiple areas. One area focuses on how stakeholders view WPP in relationship to the state health plan.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 6:45pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison