Minutes

UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee
September 8, 2008 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Sanjay Asthana, Bill Busse, Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Jeff Grossman, Cindy Haq, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Susan Skochelak, Jeff Stearns, Rod Welch, George Wilding

Members Absent: Susan Goelzer, Tom Grist, Rick Moss, Gordon Ridley

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

Guests: Kathy Massoth

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

1. Approval of August 11, 2008 minutes

Busse moved approval of the draft August 11, 2008 minutes and Drinkwater seconded. The motion unanimously passed with inclusion of an editorial change.

2. Announcements

Meetings in October
DeLuca announced that MERC will have two meetings in October: a monthly meeting on October 13 as well as the joint meeting with OAC on October 15. The joint meeting will focus on the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan.

2007 Annual Report
Smith announced that the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) 2007 Annual Report was approved by the UW System Board of Regents on August 21. The report will be reviewed by the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, Inc. on September 26.

New Investigator Program update
Smith announced that 25 assistant professors submitted New Investigator Program (NIP) applications. After a discussion of the review process, Skochelak made a motion to grant authority to the MERC Executive Subcommittee to review the ranked list of applicants compiled by the MERC NIP Application Review Subcommittee and to make a determination of the applicants to be interviewed. Welch seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. MERC will interview finalists on November 10.
Collaborative Health Sciences Program 2008-09 timeline
There was general agreement to the timeline proposed by WPP staff for the 2008-09 cycle of the Collaborative Health Sciences Program. The Request for Proposals will be released on or around November 21 with preliminary applications due on January 23. Invitations to submit full applications will be released on or around March 9 with applications due on April 17. MERC will interview the top ranked applicants and make award decisions on June 8.

3. Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW) interim progress report presentation

Javier Nieto, MD, PhD, presented an interim progress report on the Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW). DeLuca commented on the initial success of the project. Busse pondered the 30% refusal rate by those approached to participate. Nieto noted that many survey research projects experience refusal rates at that level, but SHOW is hoping to achieve a lower rate. DeLuca added that some participants may self select; for example individuals who are not healthy may be less willing to participate. Nieto indicated that self-selection is always a problem when doing this type of research. Following a question by Plane, Nieto responded that participant literacy was being assessed and assistance was being provided.

4. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) report

Nycz provided an overview of the August 20 Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) meeting which focused on the Five-Year Plan. OAC decided to revise the mission and vision statements. To increase impact, OAC members agreed to work on a decision-making process for more focused awards in the Community-Academic Partnership Fund. Focus areas will be based on the most urgent public health needs of the state, and will use the findings from Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State, the public comment survey and stakeholder input from the evaluation.

OAC also agreed to a new grant category to follow implementation awards with the goal of promoting sustainability through permanent institutional or community changes in health policy or practices, or expansion of the program activity to other communities. The OAC and its Public Health Education and Training Subcommittee recommended that continuing public health education and training initiatives should make use of innovative methods and technologies to address barriers, such as time, distance, and money, which is reflected in the draft plan.

Nycz added that 82 Community-Academic Partnership Fund proposals were submitted last month.

5. MERC Executive Subcommittee report

Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine final planning grant and interim implementation grant

Remington and Wilding provided an overview of the final and interim progress reports from Byron Crouse, MD, for the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine’s (WARM) planning grant and implementation grant, respectively. WARM aims to increase the number of medical students who are committed to practicing in rural areas. Both grants supported the start-up of the program, including the design of the admissions process, development of the clerkship sites at
Marshfield Clinic, Gundersen Lutheran, and Aurora Bay Care, and the design of a new course, *Overview of Rural Health*. Five students out of 13 applicants entered the program in 2007 followed by 13 students out of 27 applicants who enrolled in 2008.

Although the reports showed significant progress in implementing the program, there was a lack of understanding by MERC of the size and source of the applicant pool. DeLuca underscored the understanding that WARM will recover 75% of tuition dollars generated by students. Ken Mount confirmed tuition recovery and indicated that there is a sustainable budget going forward and that WARM will not be reapplying for WPP funding.

**Novel Exploratory Approaches to Elucidating the Role of GRAIL in CD25+ T Regulatory Cell Biological Function final New Investigator Program report**

Busse and Haq presented an overview of the final report from Christine Seroogy, MD, on her New Investigator Program grant, *Novel Exploratory Approaches to Elucidating the Role of GRAIL in CD 25+ T Regulatory Cell Biological Function*. Dr. Seroogy provided new observations on GRAIL and its role in the regulation of T regulatory cells. She has begun to determine the circumstances under which this gene product functions, how it is important in the regulation of cellular functions and has also extended her work from the bench to patients. This grant has resulted in publications in competitive journals and in presentations, and has also resulted in extramural funding through the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology in the amount of $300,000.

Following concern by the Executive Subcommittee that the report would be difficult to understand from a public perspective, Dr. Seroogy was asked to more clearly define how her observations will interface with human disease and how an understanding of this cell’s function may be important to improving the health of patients. She was also asked to comment on how her work can potentially contribute to the transformation of the School to an integrated school of medicine and public health.

6. **Discuss application process for targeted grants concluding within the next six months**

Smith presented an overview of draft application instructions for targeted grants. MERC discussed the following recommendations:

- Clarify that all MERC grantees seeking continued funding are required to complete an application, whether the initial grant was funded by the Dean’s Strategic fund, by MERC, or jointly by the MERC and the Strategic fund.
- Allow requests of up to five years.
- Consider changing the title to "MERC Initiated” or “MERC Programmatic" grant application.

The revised application instructions will be discussed by MERC in October.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 6:50pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison