Minutes

UW School of Medicine and Public Health
Medical Education and Research Committee
October 13, 2008 at 5:00PM – Room 4201 Health Sciences Learning Center

Members Present: Bill Busse, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Jeff Grossman, Cindy Haq, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz, Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Gordon Ridley, Jeff Stearns, Rod Welch, George Wilding

Members Absent: Sanjay Asthana, Molly Carnes, Cindy Czajkowski, Tom Grist, Susan Skochelak

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

Invited Guests: Maureen Smith

Other Guests: Byron Crouse

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

1. Approval of September 8, 2008 minutes

Busse moved approval of the draft September 8, 2008 minutes. Grossman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements

Joint MERC/OAC meeting – October 15, 1:00pm, 4201 HSLC
Smith distributed the agenda for the joint meeting of the MERC and the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) on October 15 which will focus on the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan.

WUHF review of 2007 Annual Report
Smith reported on the September 26 meeting with the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, Inc. (WUHF) to review the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) 2007 Annual Report, which went well.

New Investigator Program update
The New Investigator Program Application Review Subcommittee will meet on October 27 to discuss the 25 applications submitted during the 2008 cycle. The Subcommittee will compile and forward a ranked list of applicants to the MERC Executive Subcommittee which was charged by MERC to make a final determination of the applicants to be interviewed. MERC will interview finalists on November 10.
3. MERC Executive Subcommittee report

DeLuca reported that the October 6 Executive Subcommittee meeting focused on discussion of the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan and the financial projections for the WPP which will be covered later in the meeting.

4. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) report

Goelzer provided an overview of the September 17 OAC meeting. The committee welcomed Valerie Gilchrist as a new School representative. Four membership terms expire in October – Greg Nycz, June Martin Perry, David Kindig, and Philip Farrell – and all but June Martin Perry have agreed to be re-appointed. OAC spent considerable time discussing a draft of the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan. Suggestions were incorporated into the version that is being discussed later in the meeting.

The OAC established the ad hoc Healthy Birth Outcomes Steering Subcommittee with the purpose of leading the development of the Healthy Birth Outcomes Initiative and establishing the planning and implementation proposal and award process. The Subcommittee was charged with providing overall leadership and establishing strategic direction to the WPP for the Healthy Birth Outcome Initiative. It will develop a program framework, set goals and objectives, expectations and indicators of success using short-term and long-term benchmarks. Philip Farrell has agreed to co-chair the committee of 10-15 members.

Goelzer reported that the 85 Community-Academic Partnership Fund proposals submitted in August are undergoing an external review. The OAC added an expert review process for the top-ranked implementation grants with three to four panels of eight individuals who will provide a panel review for the top ranked proposals.

5. Health Innovations Program (HIP) interim progress report presentation

Maureen Smith, MD, PhD, MPH, presented an interim progress report on the Health Innovation Program (HIP). Following a question by DeLuca on HIP’s funding sources, Smith clarified that the program received funding from MERC, UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, UW-Madison Graduate School and the Medical College of Wisconsin. Busse commented that HIP provides mentoring services to researchers, which has resulted in their being more competitive for extramural funding. Smith noted that HIP focuses on capacity building and investing in high quality projects where there may not be other funding sources. Remington commented that the HIP’s administrative structure could be a model of success that could be applied in other programs. He asked for clarification of who makes up HIP’s staff and what they do. Nycz recommended seeking an annual contribution from the UW Hospital and Clinics since HIP provides quality care improvement services.
There was a general consensus by MERC that HIP has been successful in engaging trainees, recruiting faculty, and supporting a diversity of projects. Considering the relatively low level of activity in health services research at the start of this project, there has been tremendous progress in stimulating new activity in this area which is critical to the transformation of the School.

6. Discussion and decision on 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan

DeLuca reported that there was general agreement by the Executive Subcommittee that the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan was well-written and accurately reflects the MERC’s discussions and decisions for new and requests for renewals of initiatives funded in the first five year plan. Smith noted that the draft plan includes a new section on the WPP evaluation and that an executive summary is being drafted. A separate report detailing the methods and findings of the evaluation will be released in conjunction with the plan.

MERC discussed the following changes to the plan:

- Clarify that MERC’s education initiatives will meet health care challenges, including addressing the needs of underserved populations.
- Ensure 2nd bullet under Community Engagement Initiatives on page 21 is inclusive of external organizations.
- Change 2nd bullet under Medical Education and Research Initiatives on page 23 to “Seek to align with the state’s most important public health concerns.”

Remington moved approval of the WPP 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan with specific reference to the sections relevant to MERC and with incorporation of the changes discussed by MERC. Drinkwater seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. The plan will be discussed with OAC at the joint meeting, including a review of the WPP’s mission and vision.

7. Presentation of financial projections

Mount presented an overview of financial projections for MERC during 2009-2014, including potential MERC and Strategic ongoing projects as well as potential new initiatives. With recent volatility in the stock market, he estimates at least a 10% decrease in the value of the endowment. As of December 31, 2008, Mount expects annual interest income from the endowment and expendable funds of over $10 million and one-time cash of over $29 million, respectively.

DeLuca reported that the Executive Subcommittee recommended reducing the amount of funding available for MERC potential ongoing projects to allow for funding of new initiatives. Mount projects a reduction of one-time cash of up to $8.4 million per year for ongoing and new initiatives during 2009-2014: The assumptions for new initiatives are as follows:

- Committing $1 million annually to expand the competitive Collaborative Health Sciences Program (CHSP) to include several awards targeting areas specified in the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan,
- Providing $500,000 annually to develop and expand faculty in applied public health research and community engagement,
- Dedicating $1 million annually to joint OAC/MERC initiatives, and
- Providing $500,000 annually to shared services supporting community-based research.

Mount recommended including a contingency in future Memoranda of Understanding which indicates that MERC may renegotiate budgets if the committee’s spending policy changes. For example, a change in MERC’s spending policy may be required if there is continued volatility in the stock market.

Mount will present the financial projections to OAC later this month.

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

Discussion of the application process for targeted grants was deferred until a future meeting.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.

Recorder, Tonya Mathison