Minutes

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

Members Present: Bill Busse, Molly Carnes, Paul DeLuca, Norm Drinkwater, Susan Goelzer, Jeff Grossman, Cindy Haq, Rick Moss, Javier Nieto, Greg Nycz (phone), Mary Beth Plane, Patrick Remington, Susan Skochelak, Rod Welch, George Wilding

Members Absent: Sanjay Asthana, Cindy Czajkowski, Tom Grist, Gordon Ridley, Jeff Stearns

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

Invited Guests: Tim Kamp

Other Guests: Barb Duerst

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

1. Approval of draft minutes

Busse moved approval of the draft October 15, 2008 joint OAC/MERC minutes and the draft November 10, 2008 MERC minutes. Carnes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements

New Investigator Program grantee orientation scheduled
An orientation for the four 2008 New Investigator Program grantees is scheduled on December 16. WPP staff will provide an overview of MERC’s grant administration guidelines, including a detailed review of required reporting documents.

Release of 2008-09 Collaborative Health Sciences Program
The 2008-09 Collaborative Health Sciences Program Request for Proposals was released on November 21. An applicant information session is scheduled on December 11. Following a brief presentation by WPP staff, Norm Drinkwater and Javier Nieto will be available to answer questions. Preliminary applications are due January 23, 2009. Following a review by the CHSP Application Review Subcommittee and subsequent approval by MERC, applicants will be notified by March 10 regarding whether they are invited to submit a full application.

December 4, 2008 UW Board of Regents meeting
Smith reported that on December 4 the UW System Board of Regents unanimously approved the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan.
3. Interim progress report presentations:

Master of Public Health Program
Patrick Remington, MD, MPH, presented an interim progress report on the Master of Public Health Program (MPH). Busse inquired about the consequences of students’ field experiences. Remington noted that the field experiences are focused on implementing problem solving approaches in the community. Those experiences are highlighted during several symposia each year when students present to classmates and core program faculty.

Since consideration is being given to moving the MPH budget from MERC to the core budget of the School, Drinkwater noted that MERC could consider supporting the program’s distance education component. Skochelak added that there is a lot of interest in such a program. Remington reported that a committee is planning the development of a distance education component, but it is moving slowly since it is currently focused on accreditation.

In response to a question on job placement, Remington noted that many students return to their dual degree programs, if applicable, otherwise they typically find work in the public health field within about six months of graduating.

Regenerative Medicine Program
Tim Kamp, PhD, presented an interim progress report on the Regenerative Medicine Program. Busse inquired what type of trainees are supported by the NIH/NIA T32 training grant and if it could be used to support physicians. Kamp replied that the current T32 supports three post doctoral fellows, and he hopes to expand the grant in the future to support physicians. In response to a question on sustainability, Kamp indicated that the program is highly financially dependent on MERC funds even after charging users. The charge back is currently 50% of cost, but it may be increased following review of core use. He noted that the most widely used core is Tissue and Cellular Imaging.

Both final reports were accepted by the MERC.

4. Discussion and decision on 2009 Wisconsin Partnership Program administrative budget

Smith presented an overview of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) 2009 administrative budget. The budget was reduced by 13% in response to the decline in the value of the WPP endowment. This reduction comes as a result of not filling the communications specialist position and also not filling the 0.5 FTE position that was originally filled by Tracy Cabot who primarily worked on MERC activities. In addition, the budget was reduced in the category of other expenses, which were higher than usual in 2008 due to the implementation of the evaluation report and the five year plan. Smith also noted the one-time expense for the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) audit.

Busse moved approval of the 2009 administrative budget and Haq seconded. After further discussion, DeLuca recommended excluding the one-time expense for the LAB audit within the administrative budget framework since it is a non-recurring special expense. The OAC and
MERC should consider the audit expense separately once a bill is submitted by LAB. The amended motion was unanimously approved.

5. Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) report

Frey presented an overview of the November OAC meeting. Following a presentation by Ken Mount on the status of the UW Foundation endowment, OAC considered the following options for reducing expenses:

- OAC will review the Community-Academic Partnership Program grant applications on December 17 when members will discuss and vote on proposals based on the final ranking. It is likely that OAC will approve, but not fund a limited number of awards for a reduced amount. The OAC will make a final decision on the approved applications in June 2009.
- OAC will also consider reductions in the two public health education and training programs and existing grants.

OAC also discussed the Healthy Birth Outcomes initiative. Phil Farrell and Lorraine Lathen presented a slate of nominees for the steering committee and proposed a January 14, 2009 meeting. The revised position description for the Program Officer position for this initiative will be posted for recruitment in January.

6. Wisconsin Partnership Program Evaluation Implementation Subcommittee report

Drinkwater reported that the Evaluation Implementation Subcommittee met for the final time on November 19. The purpose of the meeting was to review the final evaluation report. The committee unanimously approved the draft final report with revisions. The full report with appendices was distributed.

Drinkwater highlighted the following sections of the report:
- An executive summary describing the report with a list of eleven final recommendations of the subcommittee. All of the recommendations were incorporated into the 2009-2014 Five-Year Plan.
- Individual closed grant outcome reports summarizing the outcomes and evaluation of the 32 concluded OAC grants and the seven concluded MERC grants.
- Key Stakeholder Views report providing views of the WPP’s stakeholders on the program’s role in the School’s transformation and on advancing Wisconsin’s public health system.

The Evaluation Implementation Subcommittee discussed the need to have an evaluation committee going forward, and suggested the possibility that the new evaluation committee be a standing School of Medicine and Public Health committee appointed by the Dean. Membership should include representatives of OAC and MERC and an evaluation expert.
7. MERC Executive Subcommittee report

DeLuca provided an overview of the December 2 Executive Subcommittee meeting. Following a presentation by Mount on a no-cost extension request submitted by Ron Cisler, PhD, for the Center for Urban Population Health Public Health Development Plan, the Executive Subcommittee recommend allowing carryover of committed funds only. Nycz moved approval of a no cost extension of committed funds for the project. Busse seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

DeLuca reported that the Executive Subcommittee reviewed the following two final New Investigator Program reports:

- The Executive Subcommittee agreed that Sinisa Dovat, MD, has made substantial progress towards the goals of her project, The Role of Ikaros in Cellular Proliferation, which resulted in additional extramural funding and a publication in Journal of Biological Chemistry. WPP staff are following-up with Dr. Dovat regarding the timeline and focus of two additional manuscripts.

- The Subcommittee noted that Laura Knoll, PhD was successful in creating an attenuated live vaccine for cryptosporidium in her project Creation of a bovine Cryptosporidium vaccine to reduce outbreaks in human populations. However, she was unsuccessful in testing the vaccine in her own lab because of the unavailability of the strain. It was unclear why this problem was not anticipated and why the studies were completed in the lab of a scientist at another university. Since Dr. Knoll’s vaccine is being used in a National Institutes of Health funded project in the lab of her colleague at another university, the Executive Subcommittee wanted clarification of whether or not she is a co-investigator on her colleague’s grant. DeLuca and Smith are meeting with Dr. Knoll to clarify and to follow-up on a potential patent through WARF.

8. Discuss non-MERC expert review of targeted and strategic applications

Discussion of the non-MERC expert review of targeted and strategic applications was deferred until a future meeting.

9. Adjournment-Closed Session: Pursuant to Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(c), (e) and (f) to discuss reductions in budgets of current grants and renewals which are competitive in nature and which involve discussion of personnel. The meeting is expected to reconvene into open session.

Drinkwater moved that the meeting adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1)(c), (e) and (f) to discuss reductions in budgets of current grants and renewals which are competitive in nature and which involve discussion of personnel. Remington seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
After considering possible budget reductions to the competitive and targeted grants, the MERC unanimously agreed to return to open session.

After returning to open session, MERC reaffirmed its decision to reduce expenditures by 20% overall for the targeted or focus areas grants funded during the first five year plan. A letter will be sent to the focus area grantees – Wisconsin Network for Health Research, Health Innovations Program, UWCCC Tissue Bank, Regenerative Medicine Program, and Wisconsin Center for Infectious Disease – explaining the impact of the financial downturn on the value of the WPP endowment and requesting that they each submit a proposed budget starting April 1, 2009 at 80% of the value of the current award until the end date of the award. In January 2009, MERC will review the revised budgets and consider additional approaches for reducing expenditures.

DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 7:45pm.

Tonya Mathison, recorder