

Research Planning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 23, 2021
2:30 p.m.
Zoom Video Conference
Minutes

Members Present:

David Ford, Ph.D., chairperson
Enrico Di Cera, M.D., ex officio
Rich DiPaolo, Ph.D., ex officio
Noah Hillman, M.D.
Denise Johnson, ex officio non-voting
Oleg Kisselev, Ph.D., ex officio non-voting
Adriana Montano, Ph.D., ex officio non-voting
Ratna Ray, Ph.D.
Daniela Salvemini, Ph.D., ex officio
Kim Schiel, M.D., ex officio
John Walker, Ph.D.
Daniel Hoft, M.D., Ph.D.
John Long, D.V.M., ex officio non-voting

Members Not Present:

Gary Albers, M.D., ex officio
Tammy Burton, CPA, ex officio non-voting
Ravi Nayak, M.D., ex officio
Ken Olliff, D.Min., MBA, ex officio non-voting

Guests

David Borgmeyer
Stephanie Decker
Christine Jacobs, M.D.
Karoly Toth, D.V.M.

1. The Minutes of the May 26, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. Charge to the Research Planning Committee (RPC) - Vote

The following revised Charge to the RPC was unanimously approved by the nine voting members present.

The Committee shall provide general guidance toward the sustained growth of research in the School of Medicine (SOM) that utilizes existing and future financial resources available to the Dean. Specifically, the Committee shall:

1. Be a forum for collaboration on strategic recruitment of new research faculty in Basic Science and Clinical departments.
2. Review data from OVPR on research grant applications, expenses, funding from all sources and trends quarterly.

3. Advise on research faculty support in basic science and clinical departments including mentorship, financial incentives, and competitive compensation.
4. Administer SOM President's Research Fund, including the Request for Proposals, selection of grantees, and review of any final reports requested of the grantees.
5. Review and recommend grant proposals for SLU internal funding programs from the Basic Science and Clinical departments of the School of Medicine.
6. Review and recommend selective single SLU applications for external funding programs.
7. Promote the growth of extramural funding by monitoring current research activities in Basic Science and Clinical departments, and by facilitating collaboration to secure multi-PI and Program Project grants.
8. Design and collaborate with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) on programming to encourage research and grant applications.
9. In coordination with departments, implement and administer a tracking mechanism for major research equipment and status across the Basic Science and Clinical departments.
10. Consider major equipment requests across the School of Medicine and present prioritized recommendations to the Dean for use of available funds.
11. Members are expected to report to their departments the information that is requested to be shared from the RPC meetings.

3. Small Animal Imaging Core

Karoly Toth, D.V.M, director of the Small Animal Imaging Core, updated the RPC on the status of the PerkinElmer IVIS Spectrum unit. The Department of MMI will no longer cover the cost of the service agreement. The equipment is currently in good condition, but it is twelve years old. Dr. Toth has concerns that if the camera which is no longer available breaks down, the entire machine will be useless. An upgrade would run about \$100k; a service contract which does not cover the camera is approximately \$22k; without the service contact, minor parts would run about \$5k to \$10k plus the labor to diagnose the problem. A discussion was held on the use and users of the equipment.

It was recommended to promote to faculty that this instrument is available, and service on instrument to be as needed rather than through service contract.

4. Shared Research Equipment Inventory

Dr. Ford asked that all departments with research programs update the inventory list of research equipment that can be shared with other departments. A template that was created in BMB will be modified and distributed to the departments to update.

Action Item: Dr. Ford to distribute equipment inventory template to departments.

5. Research Opportunity Fund

Dr. Ford announced that five Research Opportunity Fund proposals (three new and two resubmissions) were submitted for June. The seven RPC members who attended the Study Section and evaluated the proposals recommended three proposals for funding. The three proposals recommended for funding were:

Rajeev Aurora, Ph.D., Targeting T-cell for postmenopausal depression and cognitive decline. (resubmission).

Sarah George, M.D., Comparing differential gene expression in memory immune cells from recipients of a candidate dengue vaccine vs. people recovered from dengue infection. A proof-of-concept study to obtain preliminary data in support of an NIH R21 application.

Ryan Teague, Ph.D., Transcriptional and epigenetic analysis of tumor-infiltrating leukocytes from lean and obese mice.

Two proposals (one new and one resubmission) were not recommended for funding.

The RPC members present unanimously approved the recommendations of the Study Section.

Although the RPC will not meet in July and August, Dr. Ford suggested that the Research Opportunity Fund program continue in July and August.

6. Sr. Associate Dean for Research Updates

Dr. Adriana Montano, interim Sr. Associate Dean for Research, reported that she has been meeting with research representatives at the SOM and University to identifying issues that need to be addressed and to bring new research opportunities to the SOM.

7. OVPR Updates

David Borgmeyer, research strategist, Office of the Vice President for Research, announced that the internal deadline for the Mallinckrodt Grants Program is July 2, 2021. The proposal deadline is August 1, 2021. The Mallinckrodt Grant Program is a competitive funding opportunity designed to provide faculty members who hold M.D. and/or Ph.D. degrees, and are in their first to fourth year of a tenure-track position and do not have current RO1 funding. Grants are usually \$60,000 and funding commences on October 1st. The University is allowed to assign on slot. Denise Johnson will forward submissions to the RPC to rank.

8. Other Business

Dr. Ford thanked the members of the RPC for their service this past year and announced the following changes to the RPC membership: Dr. John Tavis is replacing Dr. Rich DiPaolo as a voting member (Dr. DiPaolo is filling the ex officio MMI chair position). Dr. Gary Albers is replacing Dr. Jeff Teckman as the ex officio chair of Pediatrics. Dr. Rick Samson is joining ex officio as the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program Director and Dr. Ajay Jain is joining ex officio as the MD/PhD Program Director.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Johnson
Director, Planning and Operations