

Breast Cancer Research Council Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2009: Council Meeting
Oakland, CA

Members Present: Roxanna Bautista, Chris Bowden, Terri Burgess, Moon Chen, Crystal Crawford, Laura Fenster, Karren Ganstwig, Larry Green, Shelley Hwang, Angela Padilla, Klaus Porzig, Catherine Quinn, Jeanne Rizzo, Mary Alice Yund

Members Absent: Barbara Brenner, Jim Ford, Sherie Smalley

Guests: Marj Plumb, Larry Pitts, Steven Beckwith

Staff: Sharon Cooper, Mary Daughtry, Lyn Dunagan, Larry Fitzgerald, Claudia Grossmann, Mhel Kavanaugh-Lynch, Katherine McKenzie, Lisa Minniefield, Catherine Thomsen

I. Call to Order: At 11:40am, after the programmatic review sub-committees concluded their deliberations, Klaus Porzig called the council meeting to order.

II. Minutes: The council reviewed the minutes from February 6, 2009.

MOTION: Catherine Quinn moved (Mary Alice Yund seconded) that the council approve the February 6 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Committee Reports:

A Outreach Committee: Klaus reviewed the committee's work on the next symposium (September 24-25, 2010). One of the themes will be the progress/results of the SRI; for example, the chemicals policy initiative. Workshops will include some of the statistical and demographic tools being developed. Breakout sessions will include updates and results from CBCRP-funded PIs. The committee is developing a keynote theme that focuses on the importance of highlighting advocacy and the ongoing involvement of advocates. The committee encouraged input from other council members, especially ideas for keynote speakers. Catherine Quinn added a summary of some of the cost-cutting changes to the overall symposium program. Mhel Kavanaugh-Lynch reported that the hotel deposit has been paid. Council members discussed their initial thoughts and ideas on the impact of advocates in the review of research funding and on the ideas that might be engendered from advocates within other areas of public health.

Joining Forces Conference Award: Klaus described the workshop's aims and attendees and presented the results of the outreach committee's review. Council members discussed their desire to attend the workshop.

MOTION: Terri Burgess moved (Karren Ganstwig seconded) that the council accept the outreach committee's recommendation to fund the workshop. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Priority Setting Committee: Terri Burgess reported on the committee's progress and the status report for the remaining timeline of the priority setting project, which will conclude in February 2010. The data summaries that are under development will be the primary tools for discussion and recommendations for retaining or redefining the Program's future priorities and goals. She asked council members to share their recommendations with the committee. Claudia Grossmann added that the background material to the data summaries is available on the website.

C. Ad-hoc Budget Committee: The council went into executive session to discuss the budget.

IV. CYCLE 15 Funding: Mhel Kavanaugh-Lynch announced that \$8.83 million is available for Core Funding projects, and the morning's programmatic-review subcommittees have put forward \$8.5 million in funding recommendations. Not spending the entire amount will add to the available amount for funding next year, and in the case of an investigator turning down an award, the money will roll over into the next cycle. Council members discussed their satisfaction with the list of fundable and "pay if" awards, and they identified a CRC application to receive a planning grant.

MOTION: Catherine Quinn moved (Mary Alice Yund seconded) that the council accept the recommendations from the programmatic review subcommittees to fund all of the identified applications, with the exception of the two "pay-if" applications, to be funded if the other awards are declined that then provide sufficient funds. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Catherine Quinn moved (Mary Alice Yund seconded) to fund a \$10,000 CRC planning grant to the indicated research team. The motion passed unanimously.

Tax Check-off and Faith Fancher Awards: Council members designated the Tax Check-off and Faith Fancher awards, pending acceptance by the applicants.

Debriefing on Portfolio of Grants: Mhel Kavanaugh-Lynch presented an overview of the current funding by research priority. Council members discussed the imbalance in prevention studies, the long-term research trends in other agencies and outside of California, as well as the Program's historical approach to funding prevention studies. Members discussed ideas for a Program-directed strategy similar to the Special Research Initiatives: convene a task force of experts and council members; develop parameters, budget, and target list of experts; direct a grant that will develop a report Gaps in Prevention/State of the Science; and brainstorm the best approaches that would lead to research results in prevention studies in time for the February 2010 priority-setting meeting. Staff and consulting support will be needed in order to enable the initiative.

Members felt that the council should always be directing inquiry, and the council discussed the benefits, challenges, and strategies of maintaining an ongoing strategic

research initiative that moves the research conversation forward, whether the subject is prevention, human-based disease, etc, and promotes council focus and engagement in important trending issues.

MOTION: Klaus Porzig moved (Shelley Hwang seconded) that the council direct the priority-setting committee to evaluate and plan the development of a special task force for prevention, with the goal of reviewing and approving a Request for Proposals at the Fall council meeting.

Continuing their debriefing of the portfolio, members felt that changes made to the award requirements for the dissertation and postdoctoral fellowship awards improved both the scientific focus and overall quality of the applications, and that absent the topics discussed, felt that they had achieved a balanced portfolio.

V. Special Research Initiative Funding: Catherine Thomsen reported that the council programmatic subcommittees were in agreement on their recommendations (with contingencies), which were similar to those of the scientific review committees.

MOTION: There was a unanimous recommendation to fund the three Special Research Initiative applications. The motion passed.

Catherine reported on the status of the five projects that are currently underway. Staff is attending all meetings to provide technical assistance and provide suggestions. The Survival group had their first conference call and agreed to a work plan. The California Chemicals Policy expert panel meeting has been held. The Demographics Questions group will be meeting in July. In the Environmental Exposures study, the Teachers group is working, but it is uncertain whether the Kaiser group will move forward. The New Paradigms group got started in May. Council members discussed interest in integrating the results of the New Paradigms initiative into the earlier discussions about prevention.

Three initiatives are moving forward as Requests for Proposals. The awards for the Statistical Models RFP were approved by the council during the programmatic review. The council should be able to review the RFP drafts for the remaining two initiatives by the next council meeting.

VII. Core Funding

A. Cycle 16 Call for Applications: Mhel announced that Larry Green has resigned from the council in order to participate in next cycle's funding. He left the room during this discussion. Larry Fitzgerald presented the Cycle 16 Call for Applications, including reminders of changes and deadlines. It's possible that the PARC unit at UCOP will ask for changes to deadlines, though the timeline of building the committees need to be expressed to applicants at the time that the Call is released. The PARC observed committee reviews this year with the understanding that they may take over the meetings next year.

He solicited suggestions for revisions to the Call for Applications as an interim change to the priority-setting process, such as the option of increasing the IDEA funding for etiology and prevention grants, which typically need more time and funding than other basic-science studies. Claudia Grossmann added that this suggestion is in one of the data summaries in the priority-setting materials. Members discussed the intent and funding level of the IDEA as a seed grant or pilot project, not an RO1.

B. Feedback from Reviewer and Advocate Observer Surveys: Claudia Grossmann presented results from a survey of reviewers. The focus of the surveys was to get feedback on the quality of applications, the quality of the meeting elements, and the changes made to peer review process: triaging bottom 50% based on preliminary scientific merit scores; and removal of tertiary reviewer for all but certain grants, such as high-dollar translational awards and those in which additional expertise was needed.

VIII. Director's Report: Mhel discussed the State's budget and its anticipated impact on UC. She reported that the council nominations deadline was extended at the request of several school deans. Dr. Beckwith has asked for a slate of five people per open slot. Members discussed their thoughts about potential nominees. Mhel presented the current ORGS organizational chart. Members discussed their concerns about maintaining the Program's high standards for accountability and responsibility, and were curious to see an analysis of the reductions in pre-existing staff compared to the new organization.

Steve Beckwith joined the meeting. He compared the three SRP units to the new UC Grants Research Program and reiterated the functions of the transactional units. Council members asked for details of the recharge to the program from the new transactional units. Steve said the recharge should go down in cost, but said that more adjustment will be needed; if there are people in the research units that are doing tasks that are being done in the PARC, then those people will have to be let go in order to achieve the savings. He said that TRDRP's operational cost savings this year, using the PARC, compared to last year, was \$500,000.

Members voiced their support of the pursuit of economies of scale, but expressed their continued concerns about the restriction of program functions in order to meet a savings goal. They voiced concerns that detailed questions remain unanswered, such as what the program will need to give up to the common organization versus what the program has done in the past. They also articulated their concerns that changes are being made before their questions have been addressed and before their consent to the changes has been given.

The meeting then went into executive session.

IX. Recognition of Outgoing Council Members: Council members and CBCRP staff shared their appreciation of outgoing council members Crystal Crawford, Larry Green, Catherine Quinn, and Angela Padilla.

X. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.