

Breast Cancer Research Council Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2004: Funding Meeting
San Diego, CA

Members present: John Morgan, Carol D’Onofrio, Christine White, Debra Oto-Kent, Kathy Walters, Georjean Stoodt, Jackie Papkoff, Dee Bainton, Vicki Boriack, Janet Howard-Espinoza, Jim Ford, Elaine Ashby, Diana Chingos

Members not present: Kim Pierce, Michael Figueroa

Staff: Mhel Kavanaugh-Lynch, Charles L. Gruder, Walter Price, Larry Fitzgerald, Janna Cordeiro, Katie McKenzie, Lyn Dunagan, Jill Stark, Cathyn Fan, David Betts

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:55am and introductions were exchanged.

II. Minutes

The minutes from January 30, 2004, were unanimously approved.

MOTION: Carol D’Onofrio moved that the minutes from March 7, 2004, be approved contingent upon one change: on page 4, paragraph 4 regarding task force members’ eligibility for participating in the research, consensus was *not* reached. The council will discuss and resolve this issue at a later date.

The minutes from May 21, 2004, were unanimously approved.

III. Old Business

A. Election of Council Chair and Vice-Chair

MOTION: A motion was made by Kathy Walters, seconded by Vicki Boriack, that for this year only, the Council will dispense with the secret ballot and instead vote by a show of hands. The motion was approved unanimously.

By show of hands, the nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair for 2004 - 2005 were unanimously approved.

Chair: Debra Oto-Kent

Vice-Chair: Jackie Papkoff

B. Discussion of the Cycle 11 Call for Applications

Concurrent with Larry Fitzgerald’s presentation, the Council discussed the draft of the Call for Applications and offered suggestions for improvement. Council members were asked to forward specific language changes. When the final draft is complete, it

will be resent to the council members; the Council will notify staff as soon as possible of errors.

Minor changes were suggested and will be implemented in the final draft.

- Change “award types are restricted to” to “award types are focused on”
- Put deadlines in chronological order; specify which applications (award types) are due and when
- Reduce women-centric emphasis where appropriate, in that men also get breast cancer

Specific changes included:

IDEA

- Junior investigators are “strongly encouraged” to apply
- Remove heading “IDEAs for Junior Investigators”
- The Call will reflect language identifying the checkbox to “encourage” new/junior investigators
- Remove detail about who may qualify for an IDEA
- For junior investigators, their career development will be taken into account at both the scientific level (with special instructions to reviewers to score feasibility differently, e.g., emphasizing resources at hand and not necessarily track record or available data) and at the programmatic level (e.g., an extra point)

Unequal Burden/Diversity

- Use both “disparities” and “unequal burden” in order to encourage the broadest range of ideas
- Broaden the definition to include more specific descriptors, as does NIH, NCI
- Explore the impact of public and/or organizational policy
- On the continuum, put “treatment” last, “prevention” first, in order to spark new ideas

“Critical Path”

- Like “translational”, “critical path” is difficult to define
- We could examine the NIH language
- Ask for a page describing the project’s impact on breast cancer and defining the next steps and timeframe from the end of the project to the achievement of the impact—asking the PI to both put the research into the context of a Big Vision and narrowly define the his/her next steps
- Summary/Conclusion: Larry Fitzgerald will lead a subcommittee to create a definition and a process

Applications that we don’t want

- Staff will add specific language to the application packet and instructions that define issues such as advocacy involvement and detail the kinds of research

and research environments that would be unsuitable (e.g., duplicative IDEAs, un-mentored post-docs)

- Researchers requesting a pairing with advocates will be referred to ProjectLEAD

Competitive renewal (IDEAs)

- Renewals will be peer-reviewed with different criteria from new IDEAs
- A draft of the renewal criteria will be forwarded to Council members
 - (e.g., PIs will be instructed to specify detailed deliverables in the application packet, forms, and instructions)
- Timing is an issue—the staff will research other agencies' similar awards and return with feedback; in the interim, the staff will come up with a timeline that works within the current cycle and will see how it affects budget gaps
- Funding allocation is also an issue—we will remain silent for now and resume discussion in the fall.

The issue of competitive renewals with overlaps in funding was raised and will be discussed further at the next meeting.

An issue was raised regarding setting more realistic budgets for grad students and post-docs. Increases in tuition, especially for foreign and out-of-state students, should be factored into the award cap, and offering longer-term postdoctoral awards would make the CBCRP more competitive with other funding agencies and would result in better-developed postdoctoral researchers. Funds could be allocated to a stipend, tuition, travel, and equipment/supplies in order to remain within federal guidelines.

MOTION: Elaine Ashby moved, John Morgan seconded, that the Postdoctoral Fellowship award timeframe be increased to “up to three years”.

MOTION: Dee Bainton moved that we raise the Dissertation award amount to \$38,000 per year for a maximum of two years. The motion was seconded by Christine White and passed unanimously.

C. Cycle X Results and Review Process

Comments, suggestions, and recommendations regarding the process included:

- Council members believe their scoring would be aided if they had a draft of the application packet, forms, and instructions to PIs
- Council members discussed establishing a standardized metric across all committees in order to achieve a consistent scoring range
- Some members felt they didn't have enough information about some of the career development awards and that the awards were too heavily weighted to advocacy issues and a good lay abstract
- Some members would like better guidelines for winnowing down to the final selection.

Several suggestions were discussed, including putting applications into tertiles within each (programmatic review) committee and looking at the scientific merit scores while scoring for programmatic relevance.

Council members are interested in changing the review process and criteria, and formed a subcommittee to work over the summer to draft the changes. The usual application packet deadline of the end of August will be extended until early September in order to allow the full Council to convene and approve of the changes. The application packet, forms, and instructions can be made public October 1, if necessary. The summer subcommittee includes: Kathy, Jackie, Dee, Vicki (August only), and Larry Fitzgerald.

IV. Director's Report

Cycle X funding data was presented; the numbers are in flux until applicants either accept or reject their awards. No one has complained or balked at the reduced funding. We may not be able to fund any of the pay-ifs, but there is a rank list and a rationale, just in case. Council members were invited to discuss changes to the order of pay-ifs, but determined that the staff rationale was acceptable.

The ICRP (International Cancer Research Partners) partners are discussing optimal ways to coordinate research. Our research data is up on the shared database. There is a rising international interest in CRCs and advocacy/community participation.

Recommendations for new council members have been received, and the draft of the 2004-2005 meeting calendar has been included in the council packets. Council members were asked to contact staff if there were significant problems with the dates. Meeting locations were discussed, and it was agreed that more accessible locations were preferable; for example, Sacramento was preferred to Napa. The next meeting is September 9-10, 2005, in either Oakland or San Francisco; the other meeting dates will be verified then.

Tax check-off: We're doing better than last year—the mailing to the female CPAs helped. Other groups were suggested for contact, including female attorney groups in the major cities (many do pro-bono work, get involved in tax issues, etc.), and advocacy groups can also help spread the word.

Program Initiatives: It was proposed that, for the time being, the whole council will advise the Program. This will become a standing item on the agenda. As time goes on, we may decide to appoint one or more Council members to be liaisons to the task force. As regards current progress, not much has been accomplished yet. All of the changes we made will require changes to the Program's infrastructure, so we're in the process of doing a reorganization plan for the staff, including creating a new position; Council will be updated when that is approved and completed. Mhel has created a list of people to approach for input about the initiatives and questions to ask—suggestions from Council members are welcome. Mhel will send the lists to members to stimulate their ideas.

As we proceed, we need clarity whether task force members can participate in the research. Discussion ensued, but no consensus was reached.

V. Committee Reports

Collaboration

Minutes from last committee meeting will be provided at next Council meeting. Will submit article to July edition of Cancer Detection Program Every Woman Counts monthly program update, “Meet Cathyn Fan”, and Walter will submit an article in September re “African American Women: What Works?” Georjean and her staff will submit an article for the CBCRP newsletter, due August 2 to Katie. There will be a conference call at end of August, when Janna will inform the committee about outcome of CRC evaluation. The committee will begin discussion of expanded role at Symposium at next meeting.

Outreach

The committee discussed the next symposium, slated for September 9 – 11 in Sacramento. The committee discussed the first day’s activities, especially the poster section, which garnered the most criticism and will look the most different next year. The committee will ask Ellen (Mahoney?) to do the Breast Cancer 101 session. There will be a Meet the Experts lunch focused more on research topics and techniques, and a series of technical panels looking at current research techniques/topics instead of poster discussion sessions. The poster session, where investigators attend their posters, will occur on Friday as well as Saturday. Everything else will be much the same. The plenary session topic will be on Program Initiatives: environmental influences; socioeconomic issues especially as regards landscape of CA as SES, racial/ethnic, geographic influences; biological differences; and delivery of health services. They’re considering adding a session to describe high impact/high innovation posters and honorable mentions (“hot posters”) to help people transition to the poster sessions. There is a short list of possible keynote speakers—suggestions are welcome. We will NOT do a Breast Cancer Course for Researchers—perhaps on an alternate year. The committee will continue to meet over the summer.

Priority Setting

Debra Oto-Kent will email the Council members for “lessons learned” and feedback about the priority-setting process

The meeting ADJOURNED at 4:30p.m.