

**James & Esther King Biomedical
Research Advisory Council (BRAC)
Regular Session
Meeting Minutes**

**January 10, 2006
8:30am – 4:00pm
4042 Bald Cypress Way
Room 301
Tallahassee, FL**

Council Members Present:

Dr. Clyde McCoy, Chair
Dr. Richard Bookman
Dr. Sigurd Normann
Dr. Edward Block
Ms. Derya Williams

Council Members Absent:

Dr. Karen Dow
Dr. Jane Gibson, Vice-Chair
Dr. Douglas Schocken
Dr. Richard Schoephoerster

Program Staff Members Present :

Ms. Nancy Humbert - DOH
Ms. Stephanie Jackson - DOH
Ms. Sylvia McDaniel - DOH
Dr. Susan Phillips - DOH
Ms. Peggy Shults – Lytmos Group
Dr. Bonnie Sorenson - DOH
Ms. Judy Taylor-Fischer - DOH
Mr. Chuck Wells - DOH

Guests in Attendance:

Mr. Jim Francis – State Bureau of
Administration
Mr. Paul Hull – American Cancer Society
Mr. Brian Gilpin – American Heart
Association
Ms. Kristi Lam – American Cancer Society
Mr. Rod Petrey – Collins Center (by phone)

Welcome and Consent Agenda: Dr. Clyde McCoy called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members, staff and guests. Minutes of the last meeting were presented to the Council; Dr. Sig Normann recommended that references to Council members be reported formally, rather than using first names. Dr. Ed Block made a motion that, *with this change, the minutes as submitted be approved*. After being seconded by Dr. Richard Bookman, the motion was unanimously approved.

Service Recognition: On behalf of the Florida Department of Health and the citizens of the state of Florida, Deputy Secretaries Nancy Humbert and Bonnie Sorenson presented each of the Council Members in attendance with awards and expressions of gratitude for their service to the Program, and special recognition was given to Council Members whose terms expired in January, 2006: Dr. Clyde McCoy, Dr. Karen Dow, Dr. Jane Gibson, Dr. Douglas Schocken, Dr. Richard Schoephoerster, and Ms. Derya Williams.

Council Dialog with Deputy Secretaries Sorenson and Humbert: Dr. Bookman expressed his opinion that, for the sake of labor and process efficiencies as well as the accumulated knowledge base, the BRAC and the DOH should be utilized as the primary advisory and administrative resources for all merit-based, peer-reviewed, state-supported biomedical research grant programs. Dr. Sorenson cited recent studies showing that Florida is building a public health research infrastructure that is unique among other public health organizations in the nation. Dr. McCoy stated his belief that, compared to his experience with the NIH peer review process, the Program is collecting important data that may support better methods of conducting scientific peer reviews, and encouraged the Council to continue its approach for selecting projects for funding. He also commended all parties involved for their considerable persistence and dedication in cooperating to build momentum for the Program during the last six years, and expressed his optimism for its potential in the future.

Dr. Bookman noted the recent confirmation of Dr. Agwunobi as Assistant Secretary for the Department of Health and Human Services, and suggested the BRAC send a letter of

congratulations. This suggestion was heartily endorsed by all members.

Public Comment: On behalf of the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association, Paul Hull expressed appreciation to Dr. McCoy for his six years of valuable service on the Council. He offered a brief history of the funding for the Program along with an interpretation of the original intent, and remarked on the strong support the Program has since received from Senator King and the legislature. He went on to describe new legislation being introduced in both the House and Senate that, along with other measures, would establish a \$6 million base in the state budget for the Program in addition to interest on the endowment. He also informed the attendees that, based on a push for an expansion in cancer research by Florida's cancer advocacy community, there appears to be momentum in favor of establishing a \$9 million peer reviewed competitive cancer research grant program named for Bill Bankhead and David Coley, with CURED as the umbrella entity. He ended by reporting that, regardless of whether this bill passes, he believes the evolution of this Program has earned respect from the legislature and is viewed as sound public policy and a model for other peer reviewed research programs.

Brian Gilpin reiterated the American Heart Association's position regarding the importance of collaboration among the various organizations with specific disease or programmatic orientation. He stated that AHA has a goal of not only protecting this Program, but helping to grow it substantially in order to help build research infrastructure in Florida, and raise its standing from among those states receiving the lowest share of funding from the National Institutes of Health. He acknowledged the challenge of demonstrating the ongoing value of this program in order to survive the political transitions that will accompany any change in administration, and emphasized the importance of maintaining champions in the legislative and executive branches of state government.

Housekeeping and Staff Report: Chuck Wells offered his thanks to the members of the BRAC for their service to the Program. In acknowledging the progress of the Program he mentioned that there are currently more than 30 active grants, with an open Call for Applications that may take the Program to nearly 50 active grants in 2006, representing more than \$16 million in funded research. Chuck also reported that the Office of Public Health Research offices have relocated within the Department of Health complex, and introduced new staff members Sylvia McDaniel and Stephanie Jackson.

To replace the BRAC members whose terms are expiring, Chuck reported that applications from 14 candidates were submitted to the Governor's office, and a decision on six new appointees is expected soon.

Status of Lawton Chiles Trust Fund: Jim Francis distributed copies of the 2004-2005 Investment Report for the State Board of Administration and also shared a report on the actual endowment contributions and distributions from fiscal years 1999 through 2005 along with projections through FY2007. This report reflected a forecast for the net biomedical distributions in FY2006 and FY2007 of approximately \$3.5 million per year. Jim explained that while appropriations may be higher, actual distributions will be limited by the performance of the fund. He also distributed copies of the Total Fund Investment Plan for the Endowment, and agreed to provide Chuck with actual numbers used in past calculations of the payout formula.

Review of Strategic Plan: Rod Petrey noted the renaming of the document to "Toward a Strategic Plan" in keeping with the BRAC's previous conclusion that the embodied work consists of information intended to serve as a foundation for more specific planning. He pointed out revisions made to the draft based on Council members' earlier recommendations. After discussion of further minor changes to the document, Dr. Block moved *that the document "Toward a Strategic Plan," with the agreed upon changes, be adopted by the Council;* Dr. Bookman seconded the motion, and it was then unanimously approved. Mr. Petrey was

commended by the BRAC for the quality of the report and the dedication of the Collins Center in providing ongoing support for its completion.

Operations Report: Peggy Shults provided a brief overview of the status of the 33 active grants and reported activities for the previous quarter that included a site visit to grantees at the University of Miami, the completion of the migration of all grantees to the Lytmos GrantEase™ online grant management system, the release of the 2006 Call for Grant Applications, and the finalization of the 2005 Annual Report for the Program. She outlined work in progress, which in addition to managing ongoing grant activities included preparing for February site visits to the University of Florida and Mayo Clinic, the completion of a Grant Administration Manual containing policies and procedures for the Program, and planning for peer review of incoming grant applications and grantee progress reports.

In response to a question submitted from a potential applicant, she solicited a recommendation from the Council regarding a policy for allowing a current NIR Principal Investigator to participate as a project-level PI on a new TSP application; the BRAC offered unanimous agreement to allow such an application, and allow the peer reviewers to consider whether the qualifications and percent effort are appropriate for the project.

2006-07 Grantee Selection Process: Ms. Shults shared a comparison of proposal scoring scenarios that compared and contrasted the method used to select grantees in 2004 and 2005 with alternative approaches that applied weighting criteria to individual reviewer responses for each evaluation criteria. She also shared the list of specific questions used during the 2005 review process. Mr. Wells pointed out to the Council that according to 2004 Florida Statutes 215.5602, “priority shall be granted to research designed to prevent or cure disease.” After discussion regarding the difficulty in differentiating projects according to this criterion, Dr. Bookman moved that the Program conduct an experiment with the goal of ascertaining whether reviewers can effectively classify research projects by primary emphasis on prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure, and that Council agrees the results will not be used in 2006 in prioritizing projects against the Call. The motion was seconded by Ed Block, and with a vote of 4-1 in favor, the motion was approved. With the addition of comment areas after each question in the Other Feedback of the review questionnaire, the Council agreed to use the same survey mechanism and scoring algorithm used in 2005 to evaluate and rank proposals received in February, 2006.

Open Discussion: It was recommended that former BRAC members be extended invitations to attend the May BRAC meeting in an ex-officio capacity. Dr. Normann expressed appreciation for the highly effective leadership provided to the BRAC by Dr. McCoy, and this sentiment was roundly applauded by the other members of the Council and Program staff.

Next BRAC meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting will take place in Tampa on May 9th and 10th. The meeting will consist of an afternoon orientation on the 9th for the new appointees, followed by an evening reception for all BRAC members; the meeting on the 10th will be a regular business meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Dr. Clyde McCoy, Chair

Chuck Wells, Program Manager
January 10, 2006