

**Florida Biomedical Research Advisory
Council Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes**

**July 24, 2007
3:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. EDT
Conference Call**

Council Members Present:
Dr. Nikolaus Gravenstein
Dr. Penny Ralston

Program Staff Members Present:
Ms. Hope Davis – Lytmos Group
Ms. Eburn Grimes - DOH
Ms. Sherrie Hajek - DOH
Ms. Peggy Shults – Lytmos Group

During the May 4, 2007 meeting, the BRAC agreed to convene a subcommittee to review the HBCU proviso language and discuss ideas of how to implement it for 2007. These minutes report the outcome of the conference call held for this purpose.

Discussion:

Dr. Bookman's suggestions, sent previously via email to the Department, were summarized by Ms. Shults. He suggested that an invitation could be sent to all current King grantees seeking collaborative projects with faculty/students at HBCUs to align with the King projects. These might be small grants of \$10-15k. A similar announcement would go to the HBCUs with a list of the current King projects including contact information. Including students would be a requirement of the project. Application would be required from existing King PI and HBCU faculty member (5 page maximum, biosketch of HBCU faculty, and how undergrads will be involved).

Dr. Ralston spoke briefly about the Florida Research Alliance Initiative Conference held June 18th and 19th to discuss strategic tools to diversify the health professions. Around 100 people attended from 13 institutions, which was great attendance. Dr. Bookman was a presenter and participated in one of the break out sessions.

Ms. Shults and Dr. Ralston agreed with Dr. Bookman's ideas regarding collaboration with existing King grantees. Dr. Ralston, however, was concerned that it seemed driven by current grantees and not HBCUs. She pointed out that this model may not empower the HBCUs, especially for those investigators who have active sponsored research programs and the infrastructure to carry out projects. She suggested that we need a way to engage the HBCU faculty.

Ms. Hajek emphasized the actual proviso language and that all four of the Florida HBCUs must qualify for this program. She noted that Edward Waters College and Bethune Cookman College are both teaching colleges with only undergraduate programs (Bethune just started a master's program).

Ms. Grimes shared the process of last year's HBCU program. She contacted each HBCU VP of Academic Affairs, President's office, and VP of Business and Finance. Solicitation letters were sent from DOH to the HBCUs in December with requirements and an application due date of February 5, 2007. Two HBCUs applied and were awarded \$12,500 each: Edward Waters College for a project title: Cloning and Characterization of Sarcoendoplasmic Reticulum Calcium ATPase (SERCA2) in Anopheles Gambiae, and Bethune Cookman College for a project title: The Neurobiology of Cigarette Addiction.

Dr. Ralston noted that awarding four grants from the \$50,000 would give more investigators and possibly all four HBCU's an opportunity to be funded and that only making possible the awarding one or two grants might lead to fewer submissions. There was discussion about needing to

market and promote the program more (perhaps to department heads at the HBCUs); however, there was concern about the additional administrative cost to promote such a relatively small program (\$50k).

Dr. Gravenstein cited concerns about the low amount, and that most HBCUs are not associated with medical schools or clinical environments. He also wanted to know if this program could help the HBCUs compete for Federal awards/funds.

Consensus from the group is that we need more information and direct input from the HBCUs.

Action Items:

Ms. Grimes will be setting up a 1 hour conference call with representatives from the HBCUs, Dr. Gravenstein, Dr. Raiston, Dr. Bookman, DOH, and Lytmos to facilitate gathering information and ideas from the HBCUs on how best to award this money. She will make contact with each HBCU Presidents office or other contacts she has (or Dr. Raiston has) to identify participants for the conference call. The conference call will need to be posted as a public meeting. It would be ideal if the meeting could occur before the August 7 BRAC conference call but that may not be possible.

Lytmos will research Federal grants that target HBCUs so that we are aware of other opportunities and can use this information as input.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. EDT.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Dr. Richard Bookman, Chair

 8-27-07

Chuck Wells, Assistant Director
Office of Public Health Research