

**Florida Biomedical Research Advisory  
Council (BRAC) Special Session  
Meeting Minutes**

**August 28, 2006  
1:00 pm – 3:30pm  
Teleconference**

*Held in lieu of physical meeting cancelled due  
to Hurricane Ernesto*

**Participating Council**

**Members:**

Dr. Richard Bookman, Interim  
Chair

Dr. Nikolaus Gravenstein

Dr. Myra Hurt

Dr. Daniel Morris

Dr. Penny Ralston

Dr. Mary Lou Sole

Dr. Herb Weissbach

**Council Members Absent:**

Dr. Edward Block

Mr. Al Latimer

Dr. Sigurd Normann

**Participating Program Staff Members:**

Ms. Mary Bernard – Lytmos Group

Ms. Hope Davis – Lytmos Group

Ms. Eburn Grimes - DOH

Ms. Stephanie Jackson - DOH

Dr. Sandy Love – Lytmos Group

Ms. Peggy Shults – Lytmos Group

Mr. Chuck Wells - DOH

**Guests on the Call:**

Mr. Paul Hull – American Cancer Society

Ms. Nicole Souder-Schale – American Heart  
Association

**Welcome and Call to Order:** Dr. Bookman called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members, staff and guests.

**Consent Agenda:** Minutes of the June 20<sup>th</sup> BRAC meeting were presented to the Council. Dr. Gravenstein made a motion *that the minutes be approved as submitted*; Dr. Weissbach seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Public Comments:** Mr. Hull thanked Council members for their dedication in participating in this meeting in lieu of the physical meeting that was cancelled due to the threat posed by Hurricane Ernesto.

**Chair Election:** Members agreed to defer this matter until the next face-to-face meeting, and Dr. Bookman agreed to continue serving as Interim Chair until permanent officers are elected. In considering the Council's need to appoint a delegate to the CURED Council, Dr. Hurt moved *that Dr. Clyde McCoy be asked to continue his service in representing the BRAC for another year*. Dr. Weissbach seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved. Mr. Wells will communicate this action to Dr. McCoy and seek his agreement to continue serving in this role.

**Staff Report:** In an abbreviated report, Mr. Wells reminded the Council of the legislative review that will be conducted in 2010, during which the program accomplishments will be examined against the goals stated in the enabling legislation, and noted especially the following requirements for the James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program: "Priority shall be granted to research designed to prevent or cure disease<sup>1</sup>" and "The following types of applications shall be considered for funding: ...3. Predoctoral and postdoctoral research fellowships.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the second point, Dr. Bookman informed the Council that the position of the BRAC has been that a significant number of graduate students and postdocs are supported by the awards made in the grant mechanisms offered; however, the actual number of such personnel has not been officially compiled. Mr. Wells accepted an action item to arrange for the preparation of a report to the BRAC that characterizes the level of support that has been extended to predoctoral and postdoctoral researchers as a result of current and past Program funding, including the number still doing research within the state of Florida.

<sup>1</sup> 2004 Florida Statutes 215-5602, paragraph (2)

<sup>2</sup> 2004 Florida Statutes 215-5602, paragraph (5)(b)

**Operations Report, including FY06-07 Bankhead-Coley Program Update:** Ms. Shults reported that there are 48 active James & Esther King Biomedical Research grants. This reflects the addition of 17 new awards as of July 1, as well as the decisions by Program staff to decline one third year award continuation request and to conditionally continue one third year award with a suspension in payment until evidence of improved performance is demonstrated. She also informed the BRAC that the FY06-07 Bankhead-Coley Call for Applications was released August 15<sup>th</sup> as planned and promoted with an email broadcast to 676 interested parties, and that the first set of Questions and Answers was posted on [www.floridabiomed.com](http://www.floridabiomed.com) on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. As of Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, five registrations representing three institutions had been completed for Shared Instrument Grant applications, and twenty registrations representing six institutions had been completed for Bridge Grant applications. Finally, Ms. Shults presented a draft of the review questionnaires to be used for the peer reviews of Bridge Grant and Shared Instrument Grant applications. Council members made several suggestions to fine tune the wording of some of the questions, and Ms. Shults accepted responsibility for making changes accordingly before posting these questions on the program website and implementing them in the peer review process.

Dr. Weissbach informed the BRAC that he has invested considerable time in attempting to obtain percentile scores for a recent R-15 application to NIH with little success, and expressed concern that there may be significant challenges in integrating scoring data from multiple federal competitions in order to recommend funding for Bridge Grant applications. He offered to share what he has learned with Program staff. After brief discussion, Program staff accepted the Council recommendation that an unconflicted subcommittee of BRAC members be formed to assist in developing an algorithm for compiling the available scoring data from all submitted Bridge Grant applications.

Dr. Hurt relayed her concern about limiting the investigators eligible to apply for Bridge Grants to those with US citizenship or lawful permanent residency. After a brief discussion among the members, Dr. Hurt made a motion *that the published Call be amended to expand the eligibility for Bridge Grant funding by waiving the requirement for US citizenship or lawful permanent residency*. The motion was seconded by Dr. Weissbach, and carried unanimously in a subsequent vote. Staff will review this recommendation with the DOH legal council and with executive leadership for approval before proceeding with a Call amendment.

**Readout of Plans for 2006 Program Annual Reports:** Ms. Shults shared a high level schedule for publishing the annual reports for the Bankhead-Coley and James & Esther King programs and an outline of the Bankhead-Coley Report which was generally endorsed by the Council. She also solicited Council recommendations for program enhancements to be included in the reports and sought feedback on potential themes, emphasizing a starting line concept consistent with the newness of the cancer grant program. One recommendation came from Dr. Gravenstein who suggested a juxtaposed image of medical doctor, research lab and healthy people. Mr. Wells also suggested a starting line photo of cancer survivors ala the American Cancer Society (ACS) Walk for Life, without the ACS branding. Paul Hull agreed to see if he could pull together some suitable photos for consideration.

**FY 07-08 Bankhead-Coley Cancer Program and James & Esther King Biomedical Research Program Calls for Grant Applications:** The Council agreed to defer discussions regarding specific grant mechanisms to be offered in the upcoming Calls to a face-to-face meeting to be arranged in mid September. Members also agreed that at that time the Council will address in more depth the peer review and decision making processes to be used in selecting awards, including the challenge of assessing tobacco and cancer relatedness as well as the emphasis on cures. Ms. Shults pointed out a worksheet that BRAC members may use in

preparing grant mechanism recommendations for presentation at the next meeting.

**Future Meeting Schedule and Closing:** When consensus regarding the next meeting date could not be reached during the conference call, Program staff accepted responsibility for polling BRAC members for availability. It was agreed that the meeting will be planned for Orlando if possible, with Tampa as an alternate.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Dr. Richard Bookman, Interim Chair

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Chuck Wells, Program Manager  
August 28, 2006