

College of Medicine Research Committee
Annual Report 2002-03

Each department in the College of Medicine has a representative on the research committee. In addition, the medical students and graduate students each have a representative. Associate Dean of Research for the College and the administrative assistant from that office are ex-officio members. The committee meets once a month to discuss research issues important to the college and as a means of disseminating information pertaining to research to the faculty of the college. Several issues were discussed during the past year and some of these are highlighted below.

Internal Research Support Program:

An internal research support program was proposed by Dr. Marty and presented to the Committee. There was unanimous support for the concept. This program was instituted to provide seed funds for COM faculty. Approximately \$100,000 was available for the 2002-03 academic year. Two sub-committees were formed to develop this program. The first developed the guidelines for submission and review and the second was the review committee. Five faculty members from the College of Medicine received awards of \$20,000 each. As part of the program, faculty receiving the awards must document that the data obtained with this support has been used to apply for an external grant preferably from the NIH.

Research Day:

Committee has active involvement in the activities of Research Day. Part of the charge to the committee is to nominate potential speakers to the Dean of the College of Medicine. Members are asked to chair the judging committees and to recruit additional judges. Research Day was held on February 13, 2003 and William Hauswirth, Ph.D. from the University of Florida was selected to be the speaker. Dr. Hauswirth's lecture "A Broad Range of Retinal Diseases are Potentially Treatable using AAV-Vector Gene Therapies" was well attended and well received. 151 abstracts were accepted and presented in poster format. 97 of these posters were presented by medical students, graduate students, undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows and residents from the three colleges. A total of 49 awards were given. The Research Committee thanks all the judges for their hard work and effort in making this a rewarding experience for the students. For future research days, Dr. Ken Keller suggested establishing a \$1,000 graduate student award. This could possibly be given through the Development office. Committee on Research would set the criteria for award.

Seminar Series:

The committee continued its efforts to establish a seminar series sponsored by all the departments to bring in outside speakers. Dr. Blanck has been spearheading this effort. As a result of pledges in the amount of \$8,000 from Chairs and Deans, a commitment of support from Dr. Marty and fund raising efforts from the development office. The seminar series will be initiated in 2003-2004.

Bioengineering:

The University has an interest in developing bioengineering at USF. As such, the committee discussed these possibilities during several meetings during the year. The committee was in agreement that there are several researchers within the college that would be interested in this initiative. Collaboration with the College of Engineering is already occurring through NSF and NIH grant submissions. To further potential collaboration, the committee has recommended that a symposium be organized with engineering faculty to highlight research interests and foster future collaboration. There are continuing discussions at the Dean's level about the formation of a Department of Biomedical Engineering. A proposal for a PhD program in Biomedical Engineering, through the College of Engineering, went to the Graduate Council on April 21. An initiative to seek funding from the federal government has been submitted. This may provide 1-3 million dollars a year for 3-5 years for support of Biomedical Engineering in the COM and COE.

Development of a Central Scientific Review Committee:

The Committee was addressed by Norma Epley from Research Compliance on the topic of scientific review standardization for grant proposals. Record of meaningful scientific review of grant proposals will be required by the IRB as part of the requirements needed for accreditation of the University by the AAHRP (American Assoc. for Human Research Protection). Accreditation is voluntary, but may become mandated in the future. The Dean wants the committee to look at forming review committees. The IRB wants to set up central review committees. N. Epley pointed out that having the scientific part already reviewed (and approved) before the application goes to the IRB could help streamline the IRB review process. She also pointed out most proposals are coming from the COM, so now an opportunity for input is available. It was suggested by a committee member that the scientific review committee should have members who are also on the IRB. The Administration is looking at Scientific Review Committees for all grant proposals. The Administration wants central committees in the various academic areas with their own expertise to review the applications. The committee felt that scientific review of grants might be a benefit to newer faculty or faculty moving into a new scientific area. The committee also felt that this extra review would just add more time needed for proposal acceptance.

Equity Adjustment Plan and Research Incentive Plan:

The committee was asked by Dean Dougherty to develop a Research Incentive Plan.

Key points:

Equity Adjustment: The committee's proposal states that all faculty who are below the 25th percentile have their salaries adjusted to at least the 25th percentile. Faculty with less than 100% FTE would have their state contribution adjusted to match the proportion of their state line. The proposal also addresses salary inversion and compression and seeks to ameliorate these conditions. Equity adjustment should apply to all basic sciences faculty in both the basic sciences and clinical sciences depts. It was also suggested that this plan be phased in over a three-year period.

Research Incentive Plan - Base Salary Increase Option: Research Incentive plan should be applicable to all basic science faculty. Proposes to allow faculty to use their research funds to adjust their salary. The maximum salary for each individual faculty member will be based on the National AAMC tables (Ph.D.s). The cap will be equivalent to the mean of the highest level listed (130% of 75th percentile) for each of the six basic science departments, but not to exceed the NIH salary maximum. In addition, the proposal suggests a pool of funds available to cover the cost of health and life insurance for faculty participating to bridge periods of low funding. Faculty, dept and college would contribute \$250 annually to pool. Faculty should be able to participate as soon as funds available. Plan should not replace the existing incentive plan. Faculty should have option of participating in both or either plan. Any additional state salary money should be used equally for all faculty. Research Incentive Plan should be reviewed every two years.

Organized Research Centers:

Plans exist to support organized research centers focusing on Patient Safety; Hospice, Palliative Care and End-of-life issues; Brain Injury and Repair; and Biomedical engineering initiative. Other areas of possible future development include: Children's Initiative, Infectious Diseases Initiative, Prevention/Health Promotion Initiative, and Cell Therapy.

Genomics and Proteomics:

The Genomics and Proteomics Initiative was discussed at the March Basic Sciences Research Retreat. A workgroup has been formed to develop the proposal. Dr. Solomonson, Dr. Wecker, Dr. Sanberg and Dr. Bickford will put together the rationale for the need for such a center. The group plans to put forth a proposal for the Sept. 1 deadline. They are looking for funding from the NCCR and/or the Department of Defense.

HSC Office of Research:

Dr. Phil Marty, Vice President for Research at the Health Sciences Center, gives periodic updates to the Research Committee on developments coming out of the HSC Office of Research.

- a. Two full-time staff members, a Sr. Research Administrator and a Grant Writer, have been added to the office.
- b. A web site for the office to increase visibility and also provide valuable information to faculty has been developed.
- c. Efforts continue to provide support for USF/TGH Clinical Research Unit
- d. A small grant programs for COM faculty has been instituted (see above).
- e. Research Planning Retreat was held on March 19th.
- f. A proposal for a new Regional Biocontainment Laboratory Facility was submitted to the NIAID.