Dean's Faculty Advisory Committee  
University of Tennessee, College of Medicine  
October 6, 2008

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president-elect, Dr. Martin Croce, at 12:02 PM on October 6, 2008, in the Hyman building, Room 101.

Attendance

The following members were present:

Martin A. Croce, MD, Maggie DeBon, PhD, Allen S. Edmonson, MD, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, PhD, Waleed Gaber, PhD, Elias A. Giraldo, MD, MS, Stephen King, MD, Haavi Morreim, PhD, William R. Morris, MD, Linda K. Myers, MD, Renate Rosenthal, PhD, Claudette Shephard, MD, Laura Sprabery, MD

The following guest(s) was (were) present:

James Dale, MD, Polly Hofmann, PhD, Steven Schwab, MD

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as written. Minutes had previously been distributed by electronic means.

Business

Pres-elect Martin Croce presided in place of Len Lothstein, who was out of the country.

Dr. Croce began by reviewing the revised version of the proposed Chair Survey, a questionnaire by which faculty will be invited to evaluate their chairs. No further comments were offered, and the most recent revision was approved.

Dr. Schwab provided an update on an upcoming 'hot-button' issue. The 2008 budget process, which had been thought to be resolved, is not entirely resolved, due to the current economic crisis. The budget, which had been deemed closed, is now reopened. Although our assets remain good, our operating budget is under assault. There will be an additional state impoundment of some of UT's money this year. Secondly, Dr. Schwab explained, the costs of managing our bond assets, which were previously managed by the debt markets, has risen considerably. Interest rates that must be paid to bond holders have gone up considerably, and this will affect UT, Methodist, and UTMG. The credit crisis will have a significant impact, the details of which will be made known in the near future.

Additionally, Dr. Schwab stated that negotiations regarding TennCare payments to UT physicians will soon come to a head. Other than Christ Community, no physicians or hospitals have yet signed with TennCare.
The bulk of the meeting focused on Dr. Jim Dale's description of the current status of the CTSI/Clinical and Translational Science Institute grant application. The application process, he indicated, responds to an RFA/Request for Applications. The RFA is quite prescriptive regarding what elements need to be included. Our application includes thirteen sections, of which Dr. Dale distributed excerpts from the first section. Below in these minutes are some bullet-points from that section, describing key points of progress and important assets UTHSC brings to its application.

The overarching aims of these applications, both locally and nationally, are essentially to create a clinical research center with a major piece for clinical education and career development. Such centers are to encourage multi-disciplinary translational and clinical research.

The NIH study section that reviewed our first application thought we offered very good ideas, but indicated that we had not implemented them sufficiently, hence our application was in a sense "too early." In February of this year a $300k budget inaugurated our pilot projects program, and of numerous applications, four were funded. One major emphasis in building our readiness for a CTSI grant is to augment career development support. As a whole, UTHSC campus is deficient in career development programs, e.g., in T-32 and K-12 grants. The CTSI is a campus-wide institute that involves faculty in all colleges and major participation by our partnering institutions and hospitals.

Dr. Dale also noted that UT's GCRC has NIH funds through November, 2008. The CTSI budget is designed to encompass ongoing funding for the personnel in the GCRC. However, it should be noted that the GCRC, as part of the Clinical research Unit of the CTSI will transition to a new business model that will be based on charge-backs, and paying as the project goes forward.

Excerpts from Section 1 of the CTSI Grant Application as it identifies "concrete examples of the ongoing transformation that is taking place at UTHSC and our partners that creates this Institute for CTS. For example:

- The Institute web site has become the focal point of communication and information exchange. It is extensively used by faculty and students as the foundation of the Institute "Front Porch," the point of entry and source of information for Institute members and partners.
- In February, 2008 we inaugurated an Institute-wide $300,000 Pilot Projects Program. The initial RFA energized the entire CTSI community. In response we received 39 letters of intent and subsequently invited 18 complete applications. Most applications were excellent multidisciplinary translational projects with innovative approaches that covered the spectrum of CTS. In July, 2008 we funded the four most outstanding projects.
- Recognizing the importance of expanding our training and career development activities, the Research Education Unit of the Institute implemented institutional K-like and T-like Awards funded by the Institute. In July, 2008 we funded 2 Clinical Scholars (K) and 3 Pre-doctoral Scholars (T) that were selected from an excellent pool of applicants. Mentoring of these new scholars is taking place under the auspices of our innovative UT/St. Jude/U of Memphis Mentoring Academy.
- We have also developed a novel multidisciplinary graduate program that will offer M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in CTS.
- Our plan to integrate the activities and personnel of the GCRC into the Clinical Research Unit (CRU) of the Institute is well underway. As of December 1, 2008 the current staff and operating budget of the GCRC will be fully supported by the CTSI and by July, 2009 new projects will begin to conform to the new business and operating models of the CRU.
• Regulatory compliance and ethics support have been totally revamped since the previous application under the direction of Terrance Ackerman, Ph.D. who also chairs our Department of Human Values and Ethics and heads our IRB. The functions and personnel of the Regulatory Compliance and Research Ethics Unit (RCAREU) will meet the needs of Institute investigators and participants and provide the highest standards for the ethical conduct of research. For the sake of efficiency, these functions rely heavily on the existing regulatory, IRB and research support services of the academic health center.

• The Biomedical Informatics Unit has created critically needed infrastructure with our web-based Slim-Prim System that provides a platform for data entry and integration of data from multiple sources.

• We are collaborating with the informatics team of the Vanderbilt CTSA to fully utilize the data available in the MidSouth eHealth Regional Health Informatics Organization (RHIO), which is based in Memphis and is one of only several fully operational RHIOs in the country.

• The leadership of our Research Technologies Unit has successfully integrated 9 key core laboratories, including the Molecular Resource Center, Imaging Core, Viral Vector Core and Flow Cytometry Core, among others, to meet the needs of Institute investigators. We have recently established two new CTSI core services, the Tissue Services/Biorepository (TSB) Core and the Human Genetics Core. The CTSI has made major financial as well as informatics investments in the TSB Core, a fundamental component of our overall CTS research strategy. Creation of these cores has also helped to establish the process by which new cores will be developed and are the models of the dynamic process for identifying and meeting translational needs. In addition, our goal of enhancing the core functions in human genetics/genomics has been accelerated by the recent addition of a $1 million annual line item in the State budget to support the UT been accelerated by the recent addition of a $1 million annual line item in the State budget to support the UT Center for Integrative and Translational Genomics (CITG).

• The Institute’s Design, Biostatistics, and Epidemiology Unit (DBEU) has formed formal, contractual partnerships with the Department of Mathematics and the Program in Bioinformatics at the University of Memphis to establish faculty commitment to the education, research, and service mission of the DBEU. The Department of Biostatistics and Department of Epidemiology and Cancer Prevention at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital will continue as affiliated members of the DBEU.

• Pediatric research is a prominent component of our Institute (see Section 11). The partnership of the UTHSC Department of Pediatrics with Le Bonheur Children’s Medical Center (LBCMC) and the Children’s Foundation Research Center of Memphis has produced a robust research platform for basic, clinical and translational research in children. The recent successful integration of CTSI resources and expertise with those of the pediatric program has resulted in a synergy that will take pediatric clinical and translational research to a new level. In addition to the generous support for construction of new laboratory space and recruitment of new faculty committed to the Institute by LBCMC, the Children’s Foundation of Memphis has recently donated $2.5 million for the construction of a 10,000 sq ft 12-bed pediatric clinical research unit in the new children’s hospital presently under construction that will be dedicated to the Institute Pediatric CRU.

• The Institute activities in community engagement and research have been bolstered by the recent Robert Wood Johnson Foundation award Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) to the Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT) and UTHSC. The Institute is now focusing some of its community research strategies and data support on the well-defined needs of HMCT and AF4Q.

• The members of the leadership team and other key personnel have joint faculty appointments in the Institute and now receive direct salary support from the Institute.
• The Institute has recruited new staff in the Clinical Research Unit, Research Education Unit, Biomedical Informatics Unit, Community Engagement Unit, Finance Office, and the Executive Director's office.
• The Institute is actively participating in recruiting 5 faculty in the areas of human genomics, biostatistics, epidemiology, medical informatics and community research who will be jointly appointed in the Institute and an appropriate secondary department/college.
• A new building in the heart of the UTHSC campus containing 38,000 sq. ft. of dedicated space for the Institute is under construction with a scheduled completion date of 2010.

Dr. Dale expressed optimism that UTHSC stands a reasonable chance of receiving a fundable priority score with this submission (due Oct. 21). He indicated that UT has provided a current year budget of over $2 million to launch the CTSI, which will greatly enhance our chances of success at the NIH.

Next Meeting

    The next meeting of the committee will be held on November 3, 2008, at 12:00 Noon in the Hyman building, Room 101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, PhD
Secretary