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

November 1, 2010  

Call to Order  

The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, at 12:06 PM on November 1, 2010, in the Coleman building, Room A101.  

Attendance  

The following members were present:  

Louisa Balazs, MD, PhD, Martin A. Croce, MD, Maggie DeBon, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, PhD, Bob Fochring, PhD, Scott Jackson, DVM, E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, William R. Morris, MD, Linda K. Myers, MD, A.P. Naren, PhD, Renate Rosenthal, PhD, Claudette Shephard, MD, Richard Nollan, MLS, MA  

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

Polly Hofmann, PhD  

Approval of minutes  

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

Business  

Pres. Fitzpatrick began by reviewing the recent activities of the Faculty Research Committee. Pres. Fitzpatrick joined with the committee in a meeting with Chancellor Schwab last month. The committee has requested information about what has happened to indirect costs. He explained that the money was needed because the ongoing fiscal crisis would otherwise have been required more layoffs and other kinds of cutbacks. Going forward, the focus will be on enhancing the growth of research campus-wide, Dr. Schwab said. Currently there is a Research Planning Committee, which is comprised of chairs of basic science departments plus the Strategic Planning Committee. It will determine how to spend the $5 million that is this year's "initial bolus" of funds for research promotion. Currently there is little if any F&A money in the fund, which at this point has been cobbled together from various sources.  

One question the DFAC then discussed concerned where the F&A money goes--whether, for instance, it actually stays on the UTHSC campus. There was concern expressed that to some extent it is used to help fund departments that face greater financial difficulties. In principle, such money should be used to promote and cover research costs. Some DFAC members observed that the money is designated as reimbursement for overhead and similar expenditures, hence may have a measure of flexibility. Nevertheless, its uses are governed by rules.  

Pres. Fitzpatrick continued, indicating that the Strategic Planning Committee has been focusing in a number of areas, including hiring a director for the Regional Biocontainment Lab. There will also be someone to fill the Hyde Chair in orthopedics. This person will likely be a basic science person, to help
add to the already-high level of surgical/clinical faculty. Filling such a chair will be challenging, as there are rather few people in the field, and there can be challenges in recruiting high-level candidates to Memphis.

Some of the ARRA stimulus money went into putting together a suitable package for attracting high-level research faculty. Other parts of those funds went for research projects. Various groups made proposals that were then reviewed by Vice-Chancellor Rusty Johnson and a committee. The proposals were reviewed and ranked for priority, based on the University's needs and capacities. The winning proposals were then funded, in order, until the money ran out. Some other stimulus money went to equipment, including three confocal, multi-photon microscopes. Some other stimulus money went to campus research buildings.

Going forward, there is $5 million for research for the campus for this year. This is in addition to money specifically for the College of Medicine. The Strategic Planning Committee is entertaining proposals for the use of this money, including bridge money, seed money for pilot projects, equipment needs, and the like. The committee will attempt to select projects that will benefit the entire campus. Vice-Chancellor Johnson has indicated that he still has some money available for bridge funds; Dr. Hofmann indicated, however, that there are fairly narrow rules for providing bridge funding. It is possible that these criteria may need to be expanded.

Dr. Hofmann emphasized the importance of identifying the barriers to doing research on this campus, and addressing them systematically. DFAC discussion indicated that there are fairly wide differences between the challenges faced by basic science researchers versus by clinical researchers, and that these may not be adequately recognized in some instances. It was proposed that there may be a need for two committees, or at least subcommittees, to recognize the differences as strategic plans for research are drawn up. Dr. Hofmann suggested that it could be important to do a faculty survey, to find out in detail about what challenges faculty face in their research efforts.

Several questions arose concerning the structure and role of the Tennessee Clinical Trials Network. It was unclear what is the exact function of the network, which sorts of clinical trials it is to govern, whether there are any ways in which it inhibits faculty members' opportunities to conduct clinical trials, and how such issues might be best addressed.

Regarding the search for an Executive Dean, Dr. Hofmann reported that a search firm will be used. The campus search committee is headed by Ken Brown and Tim Fabian. Dr. Hofmann indicated that the likely time-frame will be 4-6 months, although that is of course not guaranteed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on December 6, 2010, at 12:00 Noon in the Coleman building, Room A101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD
Secretary