Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president-elect, Dr. Tiffany Seagroves, substituting for Pres. Reiter, at 12:09 PM on April 7, 2014, in the Coleman building, Room A101.

Attendance

The following members were present:

Sunny Anand, MD, George Cook, PhD, Terry Cooper, PhD, Denis DiAngelo, PhD, Bob Foehring, PhD, Scott Jackson, DVM, Rebecca Anne Krukowski, PhD, Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD, Edwards Park, PhD, Kaushik Parthasarathi, PhD, Fruz Pourmotabbed, PhD, Renate Rosenthal, PhD, Tiffany Seagroves, PhD, Claudette Shephard, MD

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

David Stern, MD, Polly Hofmann, PhD, Susan Senogles, PhD

Approval of minutes

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

Business

Dr. Morreim began by informing DFAC members that a number of faculty have brought forth questions based on their observation that there are quite a few differences between the version of the Education Metric that they filled out at the request of the DFAC subcommittee, versus the version now provided by the College of Medicine for test-use in the upcoming annual review. The latter is the revised version used by Dr. Hofmann in the test-run among 25 faculty, and was the alternate-version voted on by DFAC during its February 6, 2014 meeting. Dr. Morreim noted that the purpose of bringing this information to the DFAC was not to revisit or renegotiate the Education Metric, but rather to alert DFAC members that their respective department faculty colleagues may be posing similar questions to them, going forward.

Dr. Senogles then brought to the DFAC a small change in the CoM bylaws, required by LCME during its recent visit. On page 10, the description of the Committee on Admissions presently states that the Executive Dean has final say on which candidates are admitted to medical school. This must be changed to state that the Admissions Committee makes the final recommendation, not the dean. The DFAC voted unanimously to approve the change. The faculty as a whole will be asked to vote at the annual CoM meeting in May.

Pres.-elect Seagroves then invited discussion on two issues identified earlier by Pres. Reiter. The first invited continued brain storming about how to develop a small grant program for
translational science on campus. Dennis DiAngelo indicated that several meetings of this subcommittee took place in the latter months of 2013. There have also been individual discussions among various subcommittee members. Current efforts are to invite more of the clinical faculty to the subcommittee, and to engage in a broader conversation between clinical and basic science faculty. At this time the interim goal is to encourage more input from clinical faculty, whose concerns include garnering more release time for research. DFAC members were encouraged to identify new faculty who are coming in to the UT CoM. Dr. Sunny Anand observed that he has one or more new clinical faculty who might like to join such a group. He mentioned that, at LeBonheur, every service with ongoing research has at least one person whose job is to facilitate research efforts. Ultimately it is hoped that the cost of such a person will be covered via new research grants, as pilot projects succeed and give rise to grants. Generally, he indicated, clinical faculty do not have release time for research. It is mainly done on their own time.

The second topic concerned practical ways to bring individuals out of their silos for more collaboration on campus. In one way this is already being done. Medical education has now been reconfigured to move away from disciplinary silos and into transdisciplinary education. For medical students, even in basic science courses clinicians are integrated throughout, and basic science faculty turn to practicing clinicians to discuss how the basic science they have learned actually looks in the context of clinical care.

Dean Stern noted that the new Department of Education continues this evolution. Education now emphasizes a few people teaching a lot, instead of a lot of people teaching a just little. The people in this new effort/department will be held accountable via outcomes, peer review and the like.

In terms of reducing the "silo" phenomenon in research, the challenge is to create an environment in which people are not only willing to collaborate with people from other fields, but who actually want to collaborate. DFAC discussion noted that prior efforts to encourage collaborations, e.g. to create Centers around particular issues to which multiple disciplines could contribute, has had only limited success.

Instead of requiring people to move to a different department or building for such a Center, one alternative is to create a "club" such as one Dr. Anand discussed, which focused on pain treatment. From those meetings, ideas emerged that gave rise to four R01 grants. The club began with 4-5 people and ended up with around 40 or more at the meetings, according to Dr. Anand.

The question then arose how DFAC might facilitate such collaborative engagement. Most such gatherings are dependent on interested individual(s), and it may be difficult for DFAC, as an organization, to create such entities. Still, DFAC members can encourage their departments to consider undertaking outreach for common interests.

Institutional funds to stimulate collaboration could help people to come together. Informally such support is available through the dean's office. Simple proposals (2-3 pages) from people who have credibility in a particular area, describing the resources needed, the purpose, with appropriate metrics, will be taken seriously. Such proposals might, e.g., focus on support needed to get publications that, in turn, are needed for obtaining serious grant funding. Per Dean Stern, "credibility" would require that each person leading such a proposed project have at least one R01 grant. One such area, for instance, might perhaps concern breast cancer research, given that a number of faculty do research related to this area. Dr. Hofmann will provide further information.
describing the sorts of support available, which DFAC members can then pass along to their respective departments. A good phrase to describe this might be "Small Grant, Big Idea."

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be held on May 5, 2014, at 12:00 Noon in the Coleman building, Room A101.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Haavi Morreim, JD, PhD
Secretary