Dr. Simmons welcomed the Committee and presented the agenda for the meeting. Dr. Bryan Wolf, Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer at CHOP and Dr. Jonathan Epstein, Executive Vice Dean and Chief Scientific Officer, PSOM would be presenting information about strategic research initiatives at Penn and CHOP and collaborations between Penn and CHOP.

Dr. Wolf was the first presenter and shared information that the CHOP Research Institute has recently undergone an extensive strategic planning process that was faculty driven. The CHOP Research Institute has grown and there are currently 529 investigators and the funding has doubled in the last decade. He mentioned that Dr. Epstein participated in the process.

The goal of the strategic plan is to create a faculty environment that facilitates breakthroughs in research and innovation and enable CHOP to function as a high performing research institute to solve the most challenging problems in child health. The initial area of concentration is to fix issues with the research environment to ensure the environment is faculty friendly and that faculty and investigators can function as high performing researchers.

There are four ambitious scientific areas of concentration identified. These include a focus on rare and complex problems, novel therapies, life-span related research (fetal to adult), and precision health research.

Dr. Wolf further reported that investment has been made in a biobanking facility, a new Vice President of Technology Transfer has started, there is recognition that a focus on informatics is needed and there is also recognition that consistency in professional development and mentoring is required.

He stated that collaborations between Penn-CHOP are key and there are efforts to streamline administrative barriers between the two institutions.

Dr. Epstein reiterated that there are tremendous opportunities for collaborations between Penn and CHOP. He noted that for most of the students and faculty, the relations between the institutions are excellent and the tensions are mostly related to administrative issues. He believes that students may not know that the institutions are distinct.

He reported that there are currently 68 active PSOM awards subcontracted with CHOP and there are 137 active PSOM awards which include CHOP based faculty as investigator. Some examples of Penn-CHOP collaborations include ITMAT, a collaborative grant in diabetes research, a joint pediatrics-adult GI center, and jointly recruited faculty in genetics.

Dr. Epstein reported on the challenges and opportunities for collaborative efforts. The challenges include the increasing focus on ownership and commercialization of intellectual property, the potential for
competition for philanthropy, and administrative and regulatory “red tape”. He reported that reciprocity with the IRB has been a success. Opportunities include reinforcement of core beliefs and synergy between the institutions benefit Penn and CHOP both academically and financially.

Dr. Epstein stated that PSOM is building bridges with the School of Engineering and Applied Science particularly in initiatives for biomedical devices and in the establishment of a new Center for Engineering MechanoBiology funded by NSF.

The next meeting is December 13, 2016. Dr. Glen Gaulton is the scheduled presenter.

Respectfully submitted,

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