

## **School of Medicine Research Coordinating Council (RCC)**

Minutes for Thursday, October 12, 2006

8:00-9:00 a.m., 301 BRB II/III

Present: Gaulton, Gur, Kaestner, Lazar, Metlay, Rader, Schnall, Strom, Winston, Ahlborn, Passante, Pomager

Absent: Drebin, Johnson, Sehgal

### **Agenda**

#### **• Obstacles to Scientific Investigation at Penn (continued from previous meeting)**

##### **A. Endowed Chair Appointments**

- Endowed chairs are an important tool for providing support to rising stars, as well as for faculty retention and recruitment.
- The School should be proactive, not reactive, in identifying recipients of endowed chairs.
- Penn is perceived to have significant endowed chairs relative to peer institutions, although few term chairs at the assistant professor level, despite their requiring a smaller endowment. It was generally felt that this would be well received by donors as a way to seed the future of the institution.
- The upcoming Penn fundraising campaign will include an endowed chair component. Dr. Gaulton will circulate to the committee a current list of endowed chairs. Drs. Gaulton and Strom will discuss with the Dean the idea of increasing the number of endowed chairs for junior faculty, as well as soliciting an updated list of potential faculty candidates from the chairs.

##### **B. Allocation of Space**

- The current process is highly dependent upon the departments and can significantly hinder the success of new/junior faculty as it is not flexible enough.
- As space is assigned to the departments; chairs have autonomy with regard to allocation which may not match either individual or institutional initiatives.

##### **C. Institutional Obstacles to Innovation and Collaboration**

- Collaboration is more likely to result in innovation and interdisciplinary progress.
- Fostering innovation will require changes to both Penn's processes and culture which currently emphasize independence over collaboration. The School needs to find a way to foster and promote interdisciplinary teamwork.
- The COAP process overly emphasizes independence. COAP members use quality of journals and the appearance of independence as a guide when considering a candidate for promotion rather than other leadership measures such as collaboration in authorship. The process discourages collaboration because COAP considers the inclusion of a mentor or more senior investigator on publications as a sign of dependence. This has the disadvantage of penalizing good scientists in the promotion process, forcing artifactually the appearance of independence for faculty who are being considered for promotion, as well as precluding joint publications, which are key to obtaining multidisciplinary funding. Penn may be inadvertently setting faculty up to be recruited away.

- The Committee agreed that the RCC and School should consider new systems and ways to support and foster faculty beginning with their arrival on campus. In addition, the COAP process should be reevaluated and improved for all involved. The latter may include updating promotion criteria and improving materials submitted by the departments---the quality of which varies significantly and can hinder the ability of the COAP to assess candidates.
  - Support for faculty in the area of child care and auxiliary services will be discussed at a future meeting.
- **New Research Building (NRB)**
    - Dr. Gaulton and Laura Ahlborn discussed the attached October 12, 2006 presentation in detail.
    - RCC will oversee and guide the integration of the various scientific components. This will parallel the Steering Committee process which is focused on design and construction. There will be a series of workshops which will encourage participation at all levels.
    - In order to expand beyond the “silo model” of the current department structure, it will be important to encourage chairs to consider space planning and optimal adjacencies from an institutional perspective.
    - In considering adjacencies it will also be important to include CHOP. Diabetes is one example of an area that would benefit from co-location and integration.
    - The RCC members will be invited to attend the NRB Planning Retreat in mid December.
  - **Define Key Scientific Areas/Research Priorities**
    - This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Pomager

***The next RCC meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2006 in 301 BRB II/III from 8:00-9:00 a.m.***

**Action Items:**

Dr. Gaulton will circulate the current list of endowed chairs to the RCC.

Drs. Gaulton and Strom will discuss with the Dean the idea of increasing the number of endowed chairs for junior faculty, as well as soliciting and updated list of potential faculty candidates from the chairs.

Support for faculty in the area of childcare and auxiliary services.

Evaluation and improvement of the COAP process.

**Past Action Items:**

Dr. Gaulton would like to discuss the revisions of centers and institutes policies and then present at the SCDC meeting.

Drs. Irwin Levitan and Francisco Gonzalez-Scarano to return to review their proposal for a Comprehensive Neuroscience Center.

Dr. Goldman to return to discuss his proposal regarding nanobiology.

Revisit animal space constraints.

The Committee will also request that Dr. Trojanowski present the status of the IOA at a future meeting.

Drs. Gaulton, Strom, Rubenstein, Rustgi and Johnson will meet to discuss this joint structure and proposed funding for the Type II Center/Institute for Digestive, Liver and Pancreatic Medicine.