

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

Minutes for Thursday, July 27, 2006

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

Present: Gaulton, Metlay, Rader, Sehgal, Strom, Winston, Passante

Absent: Drebin, Gur, Johnson, Kaestner, Lazar, Schnall

Guest: Dr. Yale Goldman

### **Agenda**

#### **• Pennsylvania Muscle Institute Presentation**

Dr. Yale Goldman presented an overview of the Pennsylvania Muscle Institute (PMI). PMI was established as a Type II Center in the mid 1970's, and has achieved both international prominence and considerable extramural research funding. PMI is a leader in the field of single molecule motor and cardiac muscle development research, and is a model of cross-disciplinary collaboration. PMI serves as a locus for faculty from numerous departments and schools such as SOM, SEAS, SVM --- representing disciplines such as cell biology, neuroscience, nanomedicine, etc. Faculty from local institutions such as Thomas Jefferson, Lehigh, and Drexel Universities also actively participate in PMI-sponsored activities.

Dr. Goldman noted that PMI received significant institutional support from the SOM through the 1990's, including funds for the renovation of space in the Richards and Anatomy Chemistry Buildings, as well as program-directed faculty recruitments (five over the past ten years). However, more recently Dr. Goldman has not received resources to recruit new faculty to replace six senior PMI investigators who left the institution. Dr. Goldman noted that competition is fierce nationally for nanomedicine researchers and that advance planning would be required to ensure successful recruitment in this area. In the future, he envisions the Institute being organized in three targeted areas of research: 1) Small-scale/Single-molecule/Nanomedicine; 2) Muscle Development; and 3) Cellular Dynamics and Imaging.

Dr. Goldman observed that PMI was not represented on the original 2002 RCC and was consequently omitted from the SOM strategic plan. Current RCC members present at the meeting agreed that PMI is important to the SOM research mission and recommended that the Institute evolve to become a "home" for nanomedicine research, including translational and clinical research. The Institute has historically focused on muscle research, and Dr. Goldman and RCC members agreed that PMI should optimally expand its scope to support and promote research in all areas of small-scale, single-molecule science.

Although many PMI faculty are involved in single-molecule biophysics research, the RCC believes that PMI is not currently viewed by the University research community as the locus for this area of investigation. For optimal effect, PMI could develop a parallel program for faculty engaged in nanomedicine/nanobiology research, similar to the existing muscle-based program. This might include an overlapping seminar series in nanobiology, nanomedicine and translational research---designed to attract both basic and clinical scientists.

Dr. Gaulton noted that due to the current financial environment and space constraints in the Richards and Anatomy Chemistry buildings, partnering with a department would be the best way to ensure program-directed recruitment in areas of strategic importance for PMI, the SOM and University. It was generally agreed that the majority of new PMI faculty would need to be recruited in this manner.

The key to the future of PMI will be to balance the needs of individual PMI investigators with the needs of the institution. Dr. Gaulton will meet with Dr. Goldman in the next few weeks to help redefine PMI and to develop a vision and plan for implementation. Dr. Goldman will then develop a formal proposal to transform PMI into a “home” for nanobiology and nanomedicine research which he will present at a future RCC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Passante

***The next RCC meeting will be held on Thursday, September 7, 2006 in 301 BRB II/III from 8:00-9:00 a.m.***