

Adopted: July 16, 2013

CONNECTICUT STEM CELL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Tuesday – March 19, 2013

A regular meeting of the Connecticut Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee “Advisory Committee” was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2013, at the offices of Connecticut Innovations, 865 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

Call to Order: Noting the presence of a quorum, Marianne Horn, representing Jewel Mullen, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee and Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Members present: Treena Livingston Arinzeh, Ph.D. (arrived at 2:00 p.m. by phone); Richard H. Dees, Ph.D. (by phone); Sandra Engle, Ph.D.; Gerald Fishbone, M.D (by phone); David Goldhamer, Ph.D.; Ronald Hart, Ph.D. (by phone); Marianne Horn, J.D., representing Jewel Mullen, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A.; Ann Kiessling, Ph.D. (by phone); Diane Krause, M.D., Ph.D.; Paul Pescatello, J.D., Ph.D. (arrived at 1:45 p.m. by phone); and Milton B. Wallack, D.D.S.

Members absent: Myron Genel, M.D; and James Hughes, Ph.D.

Other Attendees: Cheryl Allevo (CI); Terri Clark (CASE); Laura Grabel (Wesleyan); Joseph Landry (CI); Claire Leonardi (CI); and Rick Strauss (CASE).

Opening Remarks

Attorney Horn introduced and welcomed Dr. Sandra Engle, a newly appointed member of the Advisory Committee. Dr. Engle spoke about her background.

In remembrance of Robert Mandelkern, a former member of the Advisory Committee who recently passed away, the Advisory Committee members spoke about Mr. Mandelkern’s contributions and involvement with the Advisory Committee.

Approval of Minutes – Advisory Committee Meeting of February 19, 2013

The Advisory Committee members were asked to consider the minutes from the February 19, 2013 meeting. Dr. Hart asked the Advisory Committee members to consider amending the minutes to indicate that he was present by phone at the meeting.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Hart, seconded by Dr. Wallack, the Advisory Committee members voted unanimously in favor of adopting the minutes from the February 19, 2013 as amended. VOTE: 8-0-1 (In favor: Dees, Fishbone, Goldhamer, Hart, Horn, Kiessling, Krause, and Wallack; Abstention: Engle). **MOTION**

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PASSED. (Dr. Arinzeh and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

Revised Lay Summary

Attorney Horn reminded the members to refrain from the discussion and vote on any items with which they may have a conflict of interest.

Attorney Horn mentioned that the revised lay summary for the technical report for grant 11SCB28, Dr. Grabel, principal investigator at Wesleyan, was received. Dr. Grabel was acknowledged for the very descriptive well done revision. A suggestion was made to post the lay summary on the Website as a model of good lay summary.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Goldhamer, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of accepting the revised lay summary for grant 11SCB28, Dr. Grabel, principal investigator. VOTE: 9-0-0 (In favor: Dees, Engle, Fishbone, Goldhamer, Hart, Horn, Kiessling, Krause, and Wallack). **MOTION PASSED.** (Dr. Arinzeh and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

Axerion Proposal Change—Grant Proposal 13-SCDIS-AXT-01

The Advisory Committee members reviewed the corrected cover page for grant proposal 13-SCDIS-AXT-01, Dr. Maynard, principal investigator. Attorney Horn noted that there had been some discussion about whether this grant proposal was for a group proposal or a disease directed group proposal. Confirmation has been received that the applicant checked the wrong box and had intended to apply for a disease directed grant.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Hart, seconded by Dr. Fishbone, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of accepting the revised coverage page for grant for proposal 13-SCDIS-AXT-01, Dr. Maynard, principal investigator. VOTE: 8-0-1 (In favor: Dees, Fishbone, Goldhamer, Hart, Horn, Kiessling, Krause, and Wallack; Abstention: Engle). **MOTION PASSED.** (Dr. Arinzeh and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

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Clarification of Change of Scope—Grant 12-SCD-UCHC-01

Mr. Landry presented the information previously requested by the Advisory Committee for grant 12-SCD-UCHC-01 clarifying Dr. Lalande's percent effort as co-principal investigator on the grant. The clarification was provided for informational purposes, and no action was necessary.

Rebudget—Grant 12-SCDIS-YALE-01

The Advisory Committee members reviewed the rebudget request for grant 12-SCDIS-YALE-01, Dr. Redmond, principal investigator (Yale).

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Wallack, seconded by Dr. Hart, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of accepting the rebudget request for grant 12-SCDIS-YALE-01, Dr. Redmond, principal investigator. **VOTE:** 8-0-1 (In favor: Dees, Engle, Fishbone, Goldhamer, Hart, Horn, Kiessling, and Wallack; Recused: Krause). **MOTION PASSED.** (Dr. Arinzeh and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

No Cost Extension and Rebudget—Grant 09-SCB-UCHC-09

The Advisory Committee members reviewed the request for a no-cost extension and rebudget for grant 09-SCB-UCHC-09, Dr. Shapiro, principal investigator.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Krause, seconded by Dr. Wallack, the Advisory Committee members voted in favor of approving the no cost extension and rebudget for grant 09-SCB-UCHC-09, Dr. Shapiro, principal investigator. **VOTE:** 8-0-1 (In favor: Dees, Engle, Fishbone, Hart, Horn, Kiessling, Krause, and Wallack; Recused: Goldhamer). **MOTION PASSED.** (Dr. Arinzeh and Dr. Pescatello were not present for the vote).

Recommendations for Grant Review Process

Attorney Horn spoke about the proposed meeting schedule for the next several months. She indicated the desire to have the Advisory Committee members focus on the review of the grants over the next several months and not to have full Advisory Committee meetings. Requests for routine rebudgets, to the extent possible, can be handled administratively and/or by the subcommittee. Attorney Horn summarized some of the criteria from Request for Proposals ("RFP") to use as guidance when reviewing the grant proposals. A checklist of the criteria will be sent to the Advisory Committee members. Attorney Horn also read the priorities of the program listed in the RFP, all of which will be reviewed again at the grant review meeting. She reviewed the types of grants and spoke about the increased number of grant proposals received for 2013 funding. Noting the few amount of grants that

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can be funded with the limited amount of funding, Attorney Horn suggested that only those seed and established investigator proposals that receive a certain peer review score be reviewed by the Advisory Committee members. She noted, however, that Advisory Committee members can review all of the grants if they have the time and desire. Attorney Horn suggested that all of the core and group grants be reviewed since there are a small number of those proposals. There were some suggestions on reviewing the proposals based on a certain peer review score and/or based on a certain percentile of the proposals. A suggestion was made to allow the Advisory Committee members to suggest the review of lower scored proposals. Attorney Horn cautioned that bringing forward proposals that were scored low may give not be perceived well by the public, unless there is a large discrepancy between the two peer review scores.

Mr. Strauss talked about the peer review process and changes for this funding year. He explained the change to the process when dealing with proposals that have a wide variance in the scoring. This year, there are two primary reviewers rather than a primary and secondary so the reviewers have equal weight. If the reviewers are not able to reconcile their scores within one point, it goes to the study section for discussion to determine a final score.

It was noted that scientific merit is not the only criteria for deciding awards, and a discussion ensued on the program priorities listed in the RFP. The Advisory Committee members discussed the priorities listed in the RFP and discussed the importance of articulating the fact that grants are not provided based solely on scientific merit but also based on the priorities of the program. A suggestion was made not to look at all the group projects or disease directed group grants if they fall below a certain threshold. Attorney Horn explained the two different group proposals, noting that disease directed group applicants can apply for up to \$2,000,000 and group grant applicants can apply for up to \$1,500,000.

A lengthy discussion ensued on how to proceed with either picking a cutoff by percentage or peer review score. Mr. Strauss talked about the different general categories and ranges within the categories for scoring the proposals. A suggestion was made to form a subcommittee or have the Advisory Committee go over the results of the peer review scores and then make a decision.

The Advisory Committee members discussed the suggestion to set aside a certain percentage of the grant funding available for the seed grants. Attorney Horn indicated that the RFP no longer indicates the amount of funding seed grants. A discussion ensued on some of the benefits of funding seed proposals. A suggestion was made to consider a guideline for funding seed grant proposals but not to set a limit at this time.

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A suggestion was made to not consider any proposals with scores at 5.0 or above. It was noted that approximately 90 percent of the applicants are likely to get a peer review score better than 5.0. A discussion ensued on the number of grants that could be reviewed by the Advisory Committee members within the time allotted. After a discussion, there was general consensus that the seed and established investigator proposals receiving a score of 5.0 or better but no more than the top 60 percent from each category will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee members. After discussing the increased number of seed applications, some concern was expressed with reviewing those proposals with a score of 5.0 or better given the limited amount of funding for the category. Attorney Horn suggested scheduling a conference call in the beginning of May, after the peer review scores have been received, to determine whether reviewing only the proposals with a score of 5.0 and no more than the 60 percent in each category for seed and established investigators will work. The Advisory Committee members asked CI to summarize the number of proposals that would be reviewed by the Advisory Committee members based on the suggested process before the May conference call.

Update on Proposal Peer Review Process

Mr. Strauss reviewed the reconciliation process and peer review deadlines, noting that the study section will be held on April 25 to discuss the proposals that will be reviewed in detail.

It was noted that the Advisory Committee grant review meeting will be held at the Rocky Hill Sheraton.

Discussion on CASE's Stem Cell Research Accomplishments Report

Following the receipt of comments by the Advisory Committee, Mr. Strauss noted that the report underwent a final review by both CI and DPH. The report was then sent to Yale, the University of Connecticut and Wesleyan for a fact check on the information provided on each of the universities. Minor amendments were made, and the report was finalized. The final version was presented to the Advisory Committee and is available online.

Ms. Leonardi suggested including an agenda item for a future meeting to discuss some of the recommended changes to the program. She explained the recommendation to specify the information for the institutions that the Advisory Committee would like to gather up front. Ms. Leonardi noted the need to decide the key metrics to help evaluate the program. Another critical mission mentioned is the need to look for other sources of funding and how to better leverage state funding.

While expressing an understanding that the report will not be amended, Mr. Wallack suggested having as an objective funding for an additional 10 years (2015 to 2025) and a minimum amount of bonding that would be requested for the

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program. He explained that having a recommendation with a specific dollar goal (i.e. \$100,000,000) for the period of 2015 to 2025 provides some security for the researchers in the State of Connecticut. Ms. Leonardi explained that this is a strategic issue for the Advisory Committee.

There was a discussion about the importance of coordinating and defining the information that gets passed on to the public.

Attorney Horn reminded the Advisory Committee of the reasons for establishing subcommittees. She explained how the use of the subcommittee will be helpful in venting some of the discussions and issues that arise.

The Advisory Committee commended CASE for the extensive job with analyzing the Advisory Committee's achievements.

Mr. Strauss reviewed several other recommendations listed in the report, including benchmarking against other types of similar programs and engaging the universities to reach agreement on reporting certain items. He also talked about suggestions with respect to ensuring continued funding for the program. A discussion ensued on how to encourage others to participate in the program.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be tentatively held on May 1, 2013.

Adjournment

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Dr. Kiessling, seconded by Dr. Wallack, the Advisory Committee members voted unanimously in favor of adjourning the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dr. Jewel Mullen, Chair