

January 12, 2017
12:00 PM to 2:30 PM



Conference call # (888) 670-3525
Conference code 5311418626

Biomedical Research Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present:

Daniel Armstrong (Chair)
Richard Nowakowski (Vice Chair)
Charles Evans Wood
Abubakr Bajwa
John Wingard
Susan Vadaparampil
David Decker
Allison Eng-Perez
Barbara Centeno
Stephen Gardell

Board Members not in Attendance:

None

Department of Health Staff:

- Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey, MPA, ASQ-CQIA, Administrator, Biomedical Research Section
- Teresa Mathew, MSW, MPA, Advisory Council Liaison, Biomedical Research Section
- Kaitlyn Barningham, MPH Candidate, Biomedical Research Zika Program Specialist

A quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. Board members received all pertinent meeting materials. Board members participated in-person and via conference call and could actively and equally participate in the discussion.

I. Meeting Minute Approval

Dr. Armstrong provided an overview of the meeting agenda and called for a vote on the prior meeting minutes. Dr. Decker made the motion to approve the September 6, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. Dr. Nowakowski seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 10) Affirmative: 10, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0

Dr. Decker made the motion to approve the October 12, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. Dr. Nowakowski seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 9) Affirmative: 9, Negative: 0, Recusal: 1

II. Funding Decisions for the Zika Research Grant Initiative

The BRAC reviewed a blinded spreadsheet of the peer-review results. They also received the key words, research priorities, and general audience abstracts for each grant proposal with identifying information redacted. Members recommended funding based on scientific merit, which was evaluated by peer-review scores. In addition, the BRAC recommended funding in several different research priorities and mechanisms to ensure that all the Funding Mechanisms and Research Priorities were represented.

Dr. Bajwa made the motion to approve the funding recommendations. Dr. Nowakowski seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 10) Affirmative: 10, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0

The BRAC also discussed what they would like to do if additional funds become available. The BRAC discussed spreading the funds among any grants that were not funded at 100% of their original budget. Additionally, the BRAC discussed the possibility of a "Pay-If" category. Using peer review results, the BRAC formed a "Pay-If" list. Dr. Armstrong proposed that if additional funds become available, they should be spread among grants that were not funded at 100% before funding the "Pay-If" category. Dr. Nowakowski made the motion to accept the "Pay-If" list and approve Dr. Armstrong's proposal. Dr. Vadaparampil seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 10) Affirmative: 10, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0

III. Funding Decisions for the James and Esther King Program

The BRAC reviewed a blinded spreadsheet of the peer-review results. They also received the key words, research priorities, and general audience abstracts for each grant proposal with identifying information redacted. Members recommended funding based on scientific merit, which was evaluated by peer-review scores. In addition, the BRAC recommended funding in several different research priorities and mechanisms to promote projects that will contribute to the goals promulgated in the 2014 Strategic Research Goals and Tactics.

Dr. Nowakowski made the motion to approve the funding recommendations list. Dr. Gardell seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 10) Affirmative: 10, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0

The BRAC also discussed what they would like to do if additional funds become available. The BRAC created a "Pay-If" list, and suggested that Department staff implement the same method for allocating additional James and Esther King funds that was suggested for Zika funds. Dr. Nowakowski made the motion to accept the "Pay-If" list and adopt the proposed method for allocating additional funds. Dr. Vadaparampil seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 10) Affirmative: 10, Negative: 0, Recusal: 0

IV. Funding Decisions for the Bankhead-Coley Program

Due to a conflict of interest, Dr. Vadaparampil recused herself from the discussion of funding recommendations for the Bankhead-Coley Program. She left the room and waited in the hallway until the discussion was over.

The BRAC reviewed a blinded spreadsheet of the peer-review results. They also received the key words, research priorities, and general audience abstracts for each grant proposal with identifying information redacted. Members recommended funding based on scientific merit, which was evaluated by peer-review scores. In addition, the BRAC recommended funding in several different research priorities and mechanisms to promote the projects that will contribute to the goals promulgated in the 2014 Strategic Research Goals and Tactics.

Dr. Nowakowski made the motion to approve the funding recommendations list. Dr. Wood seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 9) Affirmative: 9, Negative: 0, Recusal: 1

The BRAC also discussed what they would like to do if additional funds become available. The BRAC created a “Pay-If” list, and suggested that Department staff implement the same method for allocating additional Bankhead-Coley funds that was suggested for Zika and for James and Esther King funds.

Dr. Nowakowski made the motion to accept the “Pay-If” list and adopt the proposed method for allocating additional funds. Dr. Decker seconded the motion. Total votes for approval: (Total members voting: 9) Affirmative: 9, Negative: 0, Recusal: 1

In the discussion that followed, BRAC members suggested that the agenda for the next conference call include a discussion of reducing the maximum amount awarded in each funding mechanism so that the BRAC would be able to recommend a larger number of proposals for funding.

V. C-CRAB Update from Dr. Chris Cogle, C-CRAB Chair

Dr. Vadapampil was brought back into the room for the C-CRAB update from Dr. Chris Cogle.

Dr. Cogle presented five tasks from the goals and objectives of the C-CRAB Cancer Plan that are most relevant to BRAC:

- Reduce the number of cancer deaths that are as a result of race, ethnicity, or income.
- Reduce cancer deaths by improving prevention, screening, and treatment.
- Developing new FDA Investigational New Drugs and Investigational Device Exemptions.
- Encourage public and private partnerships in cancer research.
- Increase funding for BRAC.

Following his presentation, Dr. Cogle fielded questions and comments from the BRAC. BRAC members shared their interest in increased funding for BRAC and how an argument could be made in favor of this for the sake of being able to fund a greater number of highly meritorious grants.

VI. Pre-Planning for FY 2017-2018 Funding Opportunity Announcements

The BRAC discussed the current distribution of applications across funding mechanisms and research priorities in the Bankhead-Coley and James and Esther King programs. Dr. Nowakowski suggested that the next FOA should include language to stimulate interest in funding mechanisms and research priorities that may be underrepresented in the past five funding cycles. This is an issue that other members agreed would merit a discussion during the next conference call.

VII. Membership Update

Dr. Armstrong updated the BRAC on the current state of membership on the board. Dr. Vadapampil now occupies the gubernatorial appointment formerly held by Paul Jacobsen. The BRAC currently has one vacancy: the Senate appointment formerly held by Penny Ralston. There is one expired position that is up for renewal by the Senate. The Senate has reached out to the Department regarding the current state of membership and has received the information regarding the vacancy and the position that will need to be renewed.

IIX. Resolution for Dr. Armstrong to Relay the BRAC's Thanks to Dr. Philip

The BRAC asked Dr. Armstrong to relay their thanks to Dr. Philip for her assistance and feedback in developing the Zika FOA. Dr. Armstrong will convey the BRAC's appreciation during his phone call with Dr. Philip on January 17, 2017.

Public Comment: None

The meeting concluded at 2:30 p.m.