

MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND STEM CELL COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 10, 2006
University of Maryland Baltimore County
Baltimore, MD

Members in attendance:

Joseph Capizzi
Jack Chow
Brenda Crabbs
Diane Griffin
John Kellermann
Gloria Marrow
Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg
Linda Powers, Chair
Karen Rothenberg
Steven Salzberg
Jack Schwartz
Jeremy Sugarman
Bowen Weisheit

Members absent:

Murray Sachs
Joel Zaiman

Others in attendance:

Steven Fritz, TEDCO
Renee Winsky, TEDCO

The Commission meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

I. Approval of the Minutes of the July 27, 2006 Commission Meeting

One minor spelling amendment was offered. A motion was made and seconded by to accept the 7/27/06 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the September 14, 2006 Commission Meeting

A number of clarifications were discussed. The minutes will be revised and presented again to the Commission at their next meeting.

III. Draft RFA

The members were presented with three documents: a draft Request for Applications, a transmittal email memo of 10/7/06, and a copy of an issues list. The Commission reviewed the draft RFA section by section.

A. Introductory Section

Chairman Powers stated that since the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund is a new grant program, the Introductory Section is necessary and is meant to give orientation, background and positioning of the program.

It was pointed out that eligible cell types were not consistent throughout the document. Inserting "human cells as defined in the Stem Cell Act" to all references to stem cell was suggested.

Changing the word "company" to "for-profit" was suggested, as was omitting it altogether from the section.

Some members were uncomfortable with the terminology, "on an equal basis." Ending the sentence at "eligible" was suggested. This applies in two places in the introduction.

B. Executive Summary

The last clause was omitted, and "as defined in the Stem Cell Act," was added.

A global search and replace will be performed on the document to change "company" to "for-profit."

A member took issue with the last sentence and felt that the first two sentences were well crafted and that the third sentence should be omitted. The member also felt that "multi-disciplinary collaborations are encouraged," was an issue as it might show a preference, and the Commission agreed to delete the language.

Funding was clarified that the exploratory grants are for up to \$100,000 per year for up to two years, versus the investigator grants which are up to \$500,000 per year for three years. A suggestion was made to explain this in the document.

The parenthetical phrase that limits the abstract length will be omitted.

Discussion ensued about a letter of intent, and whether it should be requested (i.e., optional) or required. A vote was taken and seven (7) were for requesting a letter of intent and six (6) were for requiring a letter of intent.

A member suggested a policy statement be made that applicants should be required to publish and share their research findings, because of the public policy opportunity, or that those who do publish and share should get preference. A clarification was made that the awardees are required to present at the annual symposium and through annual reports, and that public policy purpose would be achieved through those venues. A member expressed concern that the additional requirement of sharing results and reagents could be burdensome. A member favored sharing of stem cell lines if they were created with public funding. It was suggested that applicants propose a plan for sharing of stem cell lines which could be evaluated. The bullet point was renamed “Sharing of Cell Lines,” instead of “Publication and Sharing.”

The group then discussed the same policy as it applies to a later section. Section II. 8, “Publication, Sharing of Research Results and Reagents,” will be renamed “Sharing of Research Results and New Cell Lines.”

Further extensive discussion ensued, focusing specifically on the circumstances in which grant recipients would be required to share cell lines developed with MD grant funds, and on the scope and terms and conditions of the requirements. Commission members clarified that the concept would be that grant recipients only be required to share cell lines if those cell lines were initially developed with Maryland grant funds. No such requirement would apply to research being constructed with already existing cell lines or cell lines initially developed with other funds. In addition, in cases of cell lines initially developed with Maryland funding that are subject to some sharing requirement, the Commission discussed the terms for such sharing, and concluded that grant recipients should be permitted to impose reasonable charges for such sharing or provision of cells, and should be permitted – but not required – to file for patents and make contractual arrangements relating to such cell lines.

C. Table of Contents

Editorial changes were suggested.

D. Section I - Funding Objectives

Editorial changes were suggested.

E. Section II – Award Information

“Facilities or renovations that are necessary for the proposed research” was added to the Allowable Costs.

Omit the “or just-in-time” and add it later in the application, when the applicants are required to submit their Institutional Review Board approval. The sentence will be

replaced with, “The funding methods and procedures will be specified in the grant agreement.”

A commissioner wanted a review of the guidelines on ethical uses, and to put NAS guidelines on site. The member felt that an escrow or similarly appointed body will need to be established and that researchers should explain with a description of the ethical issues using NAS and the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) guidelines. The Overall Decision Criteria was modified.

It was suggested that funds could be used for limited construction or renovation up to an amount to be determined by the needs of the research to advance the goals of the Act. Members proposed allowing only what is directly necessary for the research component of a project. Members voiced objection to permitting construction or renovation in the first year of funding awards.

F. Section III – Eligibility Information

It was suggested that if recipients are receiving funding from another source for similar research, they would not be eligible for funding from this fund. However, other Commissioners pointed out the desirability of leveraging the funding received from Maryland with complementary funding. The Commission concluded that complementary funding would be permitted and encouraged but not required. Commissioners requested that language clarifying “including out-of-state investigators who move to Maryland to conduct the work here,” be added parenthetically.

Other editorial changes were suggested.

G. Section IV - Application and Submission Information

Editorial changes were suggested.

H. Section V – Award Administration Information

As the Agency Contact, TEDCO will keep a log of all inquiries made through the mscrinfo@marylandtedco.org email address.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.