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BEFORE THE
SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDING
WORKING GROUP
OF THE INDEPENDENT CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
TO THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE
ORGANIZED PURSUANT TO THE
CALIFORNIA STEM CELL RESEARCH AND CURES ACT

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REGULAR MEETING

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DATE: September 8, 2008
TIME: 8:04 p.m.
LOCATION: Hotel Monaco
501 Geary Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

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REPORTED BY: Peter D. Torreano, CSR, CRR
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number C-7623

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11
12
13
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15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

INDEX

ITEM	PAGE NUMBER
CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL	3
WELCOME AND CHAIR'S COMMENTS	4
CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE GRANTS	5
PUBLIC COMMENT	NONE

1 San Francisco, California

September 8, 2008

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 CHAIR SLADEK: It is my pleasure to call the
4 meeting to order. In so doing I will call Gil
5 Sambrano.

6 DR. SAMBRANO: Thank you. So I'm going to run
7 through the roll and so just say "present" if you are
8 here.

9 Joan Samuelson?

10 Marcy Feit?

11 Robert Klein?

12 Jeff Sheehy?

13 Oswald Stewart?

14 John Sladek?

15 CHAIR SLADEK: Here.

16 DR. SAMBRANO: Jonathan Auerbach?

17 DR. AUERBACH: Here.

18 DR. SAMBRANO: Barbara Boyan?

19 DR. BOYAN: Here.

20 DR. SAMBRANO: Jose Cibelli?

21 DR. CIBELLI: Here.

22 DR. SAMBRANO: Charles French-Constant?

23 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: Here.

24 DR. SAMBRANO: John Hassell?

25 DR. HASSELL: Present.

1 DR. SAMBRANO: Shelly Heimfeld?
2 DR. HEIMFELD: Here.
3 DR. SAMBRANO: Judith Kimble?
4 DR. KIMBLE: Here.
5 DR. SAMBRANO: Paul Kulesa?
6 DR. KULESA: Here.
7 DR. SAMBRANO: Stephen Minger?
8 DR. MINGER: Here.
9 DR. SAMBRANO: Grace Pavlath?
10 DR. PAVLATH: Here.
11 DR. SAMBRANO: Pamela Raymond?
12 DR. RAYMOND: Here.
13 DR. SAMBRANO: Harinder Singh?
14 DR. SINGH: Here.
15 DR. SAMBRANO: Catherine Verfaillie?
16 DR. VERFAILLIE: Here.
17 DR. SAMBRANO: And Joel Voldman?
18 DR. VOLDMAN: Here.
19 DR. SAMBRANO: Okay. Thank you.
20 CHAIR SLADEK: Very good. Thank you, all.
21 For those of you who are returning as
22 reviewers, let me thank you for being with us again. I
23 know you all have wonderfully busy and challenging
24 schedules and I know you were reviewing grants at the
25 end of the summer as was I. And they were fun to

1 review, weren't they? And we'll hear lots more about
2 that.

3 And for those of you new, thank you for
4 joining us. This is an extraordinary, in my opinion,
5 an extraordinary opportunity to help move science
6 forward in ways that other parts of the country are not
7 able to do. And I stand in awe of the State of
8 California, what Bob Klein and all the others who have
9 put this together have done.

10 And our job is a relatively simple one, and
11 that's to separate the best science from very good
12 science.

13 And with that I will ask for us to move
14 forward to item number 4, which is consideration of
15 conference grants, and Dr. Patricia Olson will present
16 this item.

17 DR. OLSON: First, on behalf of CIRM, let me
18 thank you all for coming and welcome you to San
19 Francisco.

20 What we're going to talk about this morning is
21 conference grants and I'd just like to provide a little
22 bit of background. You all have a handout in front of
23 you which basically also summarizes what I'm going to
24 say.

25 The purpose of these grants is to enable

1 organized formal meetings in California that are
2 relevant to our mission. These are open to non-profit
3 organizations. We intend to accept applications,
4 review and approve them on an ongoing basis. The ICOC,
5 our board, has, in fact, authorized up to 300,000
6 annually from the research funding for the purpose of
7 these kinds of grants. And the point about the
8 research funding is relevant. That is why, in fact, we
9 are here today.

10 The ICOC has delegated to the president the
11 authority to review and make funding decisions on
12 individual conference grants awards of up to \$50,000
13 and recommendations to the ICOC on funding requests
14 that are in excess of \$50,000.

15 CIRM has prepared the following criteria for
16 the president to use in evaluating the conference
17 grants. And why you're here is the ICOC has, in fact,
18 requested the Grants Working Group recommendation
19 regarding adoption of these criteria. So rather than
20 ask you to review conference grants, the ICOC has
21 agreed to delegate that authority to the president, but
22 they are asking you to recommend approval of the
23 criteria that the president will use to approve these
24 grants.

25 So the review criteria are the following:

1 Relevance, impact and significance, approach and
2 setting, and qualifications.

3 And under "relevance" the question is are they
4 relevant to CIRM's mission and programmatic needs.

5 With regard to "impact and significance," does
6 the conference address an important topic in stem cell
7 biology and/or regenerative medicine, or a disease
8 target of regenerative medicine?

9 Does it accelerate the research agenda and how
10 does it compare to other conferences that are being --
11 have been offered in the last couple of years or so,
12 will it do something different?

13 Will it impact scientific knowledge and/or
14 clinical practice if the aims of the conference are
15 achieved?

16 Under "approach and setting" is the scope,
17 speakers, target audience, format, duration, scale,
18 timing and publicity plans appropriate to achieve the
19 goal?

20 Are there adequate and appropriate plans to
21 allow participation by women, minorities and the
22 disabled?

23 Is the meeting site appropriate?

24 And is there other funding available? Have
25 they lined up other funding in addition to that that

1 will be provided by the CIRM?

2 With regard to the qualifications of the
3 program director and other key participants, does the
4 program director have the experience and track record
5 in the successful organization and implementation of
6 comparable conferences?

7 Are the key personnel and speakers
8 appropriate?

9 And does the applicant organization have the
10 resources and experience to run a successful
11 conference?

12 So these are the criteria that the president
13 would use in reviewing the conference grants and we
14 would like to request your recommendation to the ICOC
15 that they approve these review criteria.

16 Thanks.

17 CHAIR SLADEK: Thank you, Patricia.

18 Do I hear a motion to make this
19 recommendation?

20 DR. SINGH: Excuse me.

21 DR. HEIMFELD: I make a motion.

22 CHAIR SLADEK: Thank you, Shelly. Is there a
23 second?

24 DR. SINGH: Well, I want to --

25 CHAIR SLADEK: There will be a discussion

1 after.

2 DR. SINGH: Oh, sorry.

3 CHAIR SLADEK: Roberts Rules, yes.

4 DR. SINGH: Of course, can't stop.

5 CHAIR SLADEK: We can't.

6 Do I hear a second?

7 DR. SINGH: I second that, absolutely.

8 CHAIR SLADEK: All right. The motion is made
9 and seconded and now the proposal is open for
10 discussion.

11 DR. SINGH: Well, you know, I think it's a
12 wonderful idea. I wanted the panel to consider adding
13 some additional features to these grants which I
14 think -- to these conferences which I think would
15 benefit the community at large. And so those would be
16 that the proceedings of each of these conferences
17 certainly in terms of abstracts as well as a meeting
18 synthesis that would be provided by a couple of the
19 people attending, perhaps the organizers, be provided
20 part of the public record and, if possible, each of the
21 participants could be asked to make their presentations
22 available publicly as well.

23 Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories, for example,
24 when they organize meetings actually put those meetings
25 on a website. Now, individual speakers have to give

1 them permission in order to make a lot of this
2 unpublished work that's being presented at the meetings
3 broadly accessible, but I think it's a wonderful
4 feature. And given the import of this endeavor, it
5 would make sense to have those things built into each
6 and every one of the conferences that CIRM sponsors.

7 CHAIR SLADEK: Alan?

8 DR. TROUNSON: Mr. Chair, I think that's an
9 excellent idea. I think it would be important to use
10 the Cold Spring Harbor-type rules. This is now whether
11 we can keep at the meeting.

12 And so I think that it's absolutely crucial
13 that the presenters or speakers, you know, provide --
14 provide agreement to whatever is published and,
15 therefore, not constrain, you know, the presentations.

16 DR. BOYAN: I'd like to bring two things up
17 and I would like them articulated more clearly, at
18 least in whatever it is that you look at for yourself.
19 And that is that an active effort be made to identify
20 women and minority speakers, not just lip service, but
21 an actual effort to do that.

22 And certainly while you have down here that
23 adequate and appropriate plans be to allow
24 participation of women, I think you should also
25 consider young faculty. Now, oftentimes that is a

1 spouse, not necessarily a woman spouse, and that they
2 have young children. They can't attend these things
3 unless there's some provision made for child care. And
4 I think that's an appropriate way to spend money.

5 CHAIR SLADEK: Patricia?

6 Yes, Charles?

7 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: May I just address an
8 issue in the wording?

9 CHAIR SLADEK: Yes. Let's have a response to
10 this particular comment.

11 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: Sorry.

12 DR. OLSON: I was just going to make the
13 comment that, in fact, we are going to request that any
14 conference material -- that any abstract, book or
15 outcomes be made available. As you point out with
16 respect to presentations, we will need to get
17 permission and we will have to look at it, as Alan
18 said, in the context of various rules.

19 With regard to young faculty, at least I know
20 that one of the groups that has been encouraging us to
21 move this forward is, in fact, a conference of new
22 faculty that is held in California between East Coast
23 scientists and the West Coast scientists. But your
24 point about women with young children is well taken and
25 so we'll see what we can do.

1 CHAIR SLADEK: I would also add just, if I can
2 take the chair's prerogative for a second, that there
3 has been such an emphasis here on young faculty, new
4 faculty, start-up grants for those beginning their
5 careers, that it would surprise me if you hadn't
6 already inherently built that into your game plan for
7 this should the motion be approved and accepted
8 subsequently by the ICOC.

9 Charles?

10 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: Yes. I don't wish to
11 seem pedantic, but "stem cell biology and/or
12 regenerative medicine" I think as definitions gets to
13 be a problem because there's a hole that would appear
14 there.

15 CHAIR SLADEK: I'm sorry. Just a little
16 louder.

17 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: I think there's a danger
18 that there's a hole in here and I would suggest that we
19 simply substitute "stem cell biology" or "regenerative
20 biology" because then I think there would be no
21 ambiguity about what was being covered.

22 CHAIR SLADEK: Okay. Other comments or
23 questions from the working group?

24 DR. KULESA: I just wanted to expand on that
25 idea about the transmittal of information from the

1 workshops or conferences.

2 I can imagine that there may be some workshops
3 that come out of this because we're on tools and
4 technologies that might be new information that might
5 be available before publication. And in sort of the
6 spirit of Cold Spring Harbor one thing that may come
7 out of that are rather than PDFs as well but maybe
8 protocols or an assembly of what constructs might be
9 available that might be shared at a point in time that
10 might be prepublishing but might be able to get
11 distributed at that point in time perhaps.

12 CHAIR SLADEK: Do I hear any other comments
13 from the working group?

14 DR. SINGH: Just one other.

15 I assume that in the conference is a
16 significant number of scientists here in the State of
17 California that have received CIRM funding will be, you
18 know, presenting. Because it's a nice way to see where
19 their work is in relation to the broader community.
20 So, I mean, in a -- without mandating it I think it
21 would be extremely important to have a healthy
22 component of California investigators that have been
23 supported by CIRM, you know, in the context of the
24 broader group.

25 DR. TROUNSON: We are already outside of

1 this -- outside this particular proposal. We annually
2 have a CIRM grantees conference which does include some
3 external speakers brought in to stimulate some
4 particular area.

5 So that we do. These are really conferences
6 that are proposed by others or maybe us proposed to
7 someone else to think about a particular area. So,
8 yes, you know, I think it's self-evident.

9 One of the issues is that we have to spend the
10 money in California with some governances on that. We
11 can do some things for the ISSCR because it's such a
12 major, major meeting. But otherwise, you know, we are
13 constrained for having our conferences, but we can
14 actually bring external people in. But you will see
15 that the primary focus will generally always be to
16 California under that.

17 DR. OLSON: I just wanted to add that for the
18 grantee meeting that Alan alluded to the abstracts that
19 are submitted by people that are funded by CIRM will be
20 posted on our website.

21 DR. KIMBLE: Can I just add one thing?

22 CHAIR SLADEK: Please.

23 DR. KIMBLE: So I would like to see the
24 addition of a provision to check in a year to see if
25 this protocol actually works, to see whether or not the

1 president would prefer to have one or two people
2 together with him or her to try and make these
3 evaluations and whether or not doing it on a once-off
4 basis is the right format or doing it with some kind of
5 calendar is better.

6 Because it may be that three applications come
7 in in the next week and the money gets used up for not
8 as good conferences. So I'd like to see some view of
9 the year, how many applications have been put in and
10 whether or not this is an effective protocol for making
11 decisions.

12 CHAIR SLADEK: My sense is the president and
13 CIRM now having recruited and hired two outstanding
14 additional officers and a chief research officer and
15 operational officer will probably not make the decision
16 by himself knowing those people who he surrounded
17 himself with.

18 But, Alan, would you like to comment on that?

19 DR. TROUNSON: I think really the wording
20 allows me to make the decision on recommendation of my
21 colleagues and that may well be a need to explore some
22 subject with people outside CIRM because we don't
23 necessarily have absolutely all the expertise within
24 CIRM.

25 So, yes, indeed.

1 DR. KIMBLE: I'm just asking for, you know, a
2 review of the procedure in a year and to see how it's
3 working.

4 DR. TROUNSON: Sure.

5 CHAIR SLADEK: And so I had a thought, Alan.
6 I'm sure many of us at the table have been part of
7 organization of meetings even at a state -- well, state
8 or international level. They are very expensive
9 sometimes. And my question is: Is 300,000 enough?

10 DR. TROUNSON: That was the amount that the
11 ICOC --

12 CHAIR SLADEK: Recommended?

13 DR. TROUNSON: Yes. So I don't actually want
14 to go back to them right now. I think if in the review
15 that we do we find that it's an inadequate number, then
16 I think, you know, there may be a justifiable proposal
17 put to the -- more if, in fact, it's in excess, that we
18 hold some over for the following year. I think those
19 things would happen after a year.

20 DR. HEIMFELD: I guess it was my understanding
21 this is, you know, sort of supplementary to additional
22 funds that the meeting itself will have to put up
23 whether those are sponsorships or from other areas.
24 This is not necessarily restricted to the entire
25 funding put on the entire meeting.

1 DR. TROUNSON: The preference is the maximum
2 should be \$50,000 or 50 percent of the total funding.
3 So it won't necessarily be \$50,000, but they will have
4 to demonstrate under the criteria that they've made,
5 you know, every effort to raise additional funds or
6 supplementary funds that should be equal to what we
7 have.

8 CHAIR SLADEK: I'd just like to recognize Bob
9 Klein who's come in. Welcome, Bob.

10 MR. KLEIN: Thank you.

11 CHAIR SLADEK: We were saying nice things
12 about you. So hopefully your ears were ringing
13 harmoniously.

14 MR. KLEIN: Yes.

15 DR. OLSON: I was just going to add what Alan
16 had said.

17 CHAIR SLADEK: Yes.

18 DR. RAYMOND: Just one more comment on the
19 qualifications of the program director. The way it's
20 stated in the proposal it's quite restrictive. You're
21 requiring the program director to have an experience
22 and track record in comparable conferences. That
23 limits quite severely the pool of people who could
24 serve as program directors for these kinds of
25 conferences.

1 So I would recommend that you reconsider the
2 wording on that to allow obviously qualifications but
3 not quite so rigid as the way it's written.

4 CHAIR SLADEK: Patricia, do you have the
5 flexibility to do that or is that --

6 DR. OLSON: No. Yes, I have the flexibility
7 to do that.

8 CHAIR SLADEK: And is that something you would
9 consider? I tend to agree with that concept.

10 DR. OLSON: And what you would suggest
11 instead? "Has experience in running conferences"?

12 DR. RAYMOND: I think the word "comparable
13 conferences" and running of them, being actually in
14 charge of it, both of those are more restrictive than
15 you need to have.

16 CHAIR SLADEK: Or how about or "has access to
17 or brings in as part of a team of organizers"?

18 DR. OLSON: Okay. I'll address it.

19 DR. SAMBRANO: I just wanted to make the point
20 that we want to remember that these are criteria for
21 review and not necessarily eligibility requirements.
22 So this is what we are aiming to achieve with any
23 particular applicant or grantee.

24 DR. OLSON: I would just say that the
25 eligibility requirements for the program director is

1 the individual with the skills necessary to direct the
2 planning and execution of the proposed conference.
3 CIRM encourages applications from underrepresented
4 racial and ethnic groups, women and minorities.

5 So that is the actual eligibility criteria.
6 It's up to the president to determine if the experience
7 would fortify the conference director or the proposed
8 conference director in the course of the other
9 criteria, how to weigh it.

10 DR. KIMBLE: I guess I have one other question
11 about the -- the topics.

12 So you want stem cell biology and regenerative
13 medicine to be an important part, but does it have to
14 be the primary focus of the conference or could it be
15 one session? Is that made clear anywhere in this?

16 I'm just thinking about developmental biology
17 conferences. Would they be able to then apply for
18 these funds if they have a session on stem cell
19 biology? Is that something that you've thought about?

20 DR. OLSON: I think that would fall within the
21 criteria. Again, you know, because we're -- in that
22 case we certainly wouldn't expect pay for a substantial
23 portion of the conference, but I think that would allow
24 CIRM funding participation.

25 DR. KIMBLE: Okay. That's fine.

1 DR. FRENCH-CONSTANT: That's exactly why I'm
2 suggesting it's changed to "regenerative biology"
3 because then that effectively covers it. I think it's
4 two times all over again.

5 DR. KIMBLE: I don't worry so much about that.

6 CHAIR SLADEK: Well, but we must remember what
7 the prime mission is and it is stem cell biology by and
8 for the State of California. So as much as we might
9 like to craft that slightly differently, by law it is
10 said as stem cell.

11 Okay. Final comment and then we're going to
12 turn to the public commentary.

13 DR. BOYAN: My final comment would be on this
14 issue over the program director. I think the way
15 you've written it is perfectly fine. And I having run
16 many of these things, there's nothing worse than an
17 inexperienced program director and the use of funds.

18 So this is -- I'm supporting you, but I would
19 put little bracket with an S so that they can realize
20 that they could -- a young person could find an old
21 experienced person as a team member and not screw up.

22 DR. KIMBLE: Both energy and experience.

23 CHAIR SLADEK: Let's hear it for age.

24 It is my -- my responsibility now to ask for
25 any public commentary.

1 Hearing none, we will now move for a call for
2 the motion.

3 DR. BOYAN: So moved.

4 CHAIR SLADEK: So moved. Second?

5 DR. HEIMFELD: Seconded.

6 CHAIR SLADEK: Seconded.

7 Gil, you get to do the roll call.

8 DR. SAMBRANO: I just wanted to point out you
9 could do a voice vote.

10 CHAIR SLADEK: We could do a voice vote.

11 MR. KLEIN: Gil, for time purposes you could
12 do a voice vote here, yeah.

13 CHAIR SLADEK: In that case the motion as
14 stated is to approve the recommendation for the
15 conference grant criteria as presented to us and
16 discussed by us today with substantial commentary from
17 the group but not the public.

18 And I will call then for all of those in
19 favor, please signify by saying aye.

20 And all those countermined?

21 The motion passes unanimously.

22 Thank you very much, Patricia, for your
23 guidance on this.

24 Don't leave yet. We have two more items. One
25 is to ask for any public comment from anyone from the

