



McKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Preserving memory, enhancing life

March 1, 2023

Carol A. Barnes, PhD
Director, Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute
Evelyn F. McKnight Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging
University of Arizona Regents Professor
University of Arizona | PO Box 245115 | Tucson, AZ 85724

*Established by
Evelyn F. McKnight
to Alleviate Memory Loss
in the Aging*

Dear Dr. Barnes,

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At the February 16, 2023, meeting of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF), the trustees reviewed the 2022 annual report submitted by the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute (EMBI) at the University of Arizona (UA). The report was seen as a well-organized synopsis of the productivity of the EMBI. The trustees appreciate the role that UA played in hosting the first in-person Inter-Institutional meeting since the pandemic – it was a clear continuation of the high bar set in 2008 when UA hosted the first inter-institutional meeting. The trustees were impressed by your descriptions of the many research achievements at the EMBI in this first “post-pandemic” year and congratulate the eight investigators who received honors and awards this past year.

The trustees commend you on your success in receiving the renewal for the NIA Training Grant and for a favorable review with an outstanding priority score on the additional grant submission. It is impressive that these two awards and the others in your portfolio will support advancements in research on brain aging and cognition for the next five years. The trustees applaud your stimulating and collaborative leadership over many years, culminating in the receipt of the U19 grant and successful progress judged by the Program Officers at the NIA of the Precision Aging Network Project, at the end of its first year. Through this monumental effort, the scientific community is collectively inspired by the constellation of efforts and partnerships that are advancing this national initiative.

The trustees also noted the accelerated progress made this year to meet the balance of the match requirement for the EMBI’s endowment. We are confident that with renewed fundraising efforts, the UA EMBI will be able to complete the match.

As a follow up to this letter, the trustees request an organizational chart of the EMBI to better understand the various roles and reporting structure between the EMBI and the University’s administration. Additionally, the report does not mention the associate director of the EMBI or the advisory committee and its role in the management of the EMBI. The trustees will appreciate receiving additional information regarding these topics.

The trustees send their collective appreciation to you for your leadership and the tremendous efforts in continuing to advance the research initiatives of the MBRF, leading to the understanding and alleviation of age-related cognitive decline and memory loss.

Sincerely,

Angelika Schlanger

Angelika Schlanger, PhD
Executive Director

CC: Robert Robbins, MD, President, UA; J.P. Rocznik, President and CEO, UA Foundation; Peggy Noltz, Executive Assistant and Administrator, EMBI, Department of Psychology; MBRF Trustees

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April 8, 2023

Angelika Schlanger, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The McKnight Brain Research Foundation
P.O. Box 620005
Orlando, FL 32862

Dear Dr. Schlanger:

Again, I apologize for the delay in getting the responses to your questions 'coordinated'. I have just now heard the details of how the EMBI interactions will work with the Administration, following EMBI's transfer from the Arizona Research Laboratories (under what was originally the Vice President for Research's [VPR] Office) to the Psychology Department that is in the College of Science.

With respect to the University Administration and the EMBI, my FTE (9-month salary) will come through the College of Science, and my Administrative Supplement to that salary for being Director of the EMBI will come from the Office of Research, Innovation and Impact (RII), which was formerly the VPR's office. There are, therefore, two main reporting lines between the EMBI and the UA Administration. One through the Head of RII, Dr. Betsy Cantwell, and the other through the Dean of the College of Science, Dr. Carmala Garziona.

Although I did not 'mention' the role of the Associate Director of the EMBI in my report, I did include her in several of the highlights of the Affiliate Faculty's accomplishments. With respect to her role as Associate Director of EMBI, she performs two functions: she actively participates in the Leadership Council zoom meeting discussions, and in the planning and execution of the McKnight Inter-Institutional meeting in Tucson. As Head of the Department of Psychology, many of Lee Ryan's department faculty are Affiliate Faculty of the EMBI, which she encourages.

With respect to your question about the Tucson EMBI External Advisory Committee, their role has 'lessened' over the years for several reasons. When I was setting up the Institute in 2006, the \$10,000M gift was expendable (it was a requirement of the UA match dollars that the \$1M match be spent each year), this Committee was extremely important for guidance and advice on these large expenditures and investments in the research of colleagues that I was able to make. For example, the building out of the McKnight Cognitive Aging Laboratory, and recruitment of Gene Alexander to the University of Arizona, was thoroughly vetted by this Committee. His recruitment was obviously a great advantage both to cognitive aging research at the University of Arizona, but also Gene has played an incredibly important role as a collaborative colleague to all the other McKnight Institutes. He was pivotal to the development of the imaging and MBAR cores across Institutions.

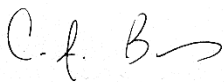
After the depletion of the first gift, and the award of the permanent endowment (the second gift, where neither the gift nor the match is expendable), the interest available to fund the EMBI has been much more modest. During the past several years I have used these funds to support the development of the large U19 Precision Aging Network grant, and to support pilot work to bolster the competitiveness of the three other RO1s on brain aging and memory that I have recently submitted (two are now awarded, another is going to be awarded in the next months). For this, I really did not require regular meetings of my Scientific Advisory Committee. Additionally, during the past several years two of my Committee Members have become emeritus (although still active), including Leslie Tolbert and Naomi Rance. Another one of the members has now moved away from the C-Path Institute, and rotated off the committee. Finally, sadly, Geoff Ahern passed away last year unexpectedly. Eric Reiman and my emeritus members remain, but I am currently rethinking how to structure this advisory group. I really depend on Reiman for his experience and wise advice, and will definitely want to include him in some way going forward.

Because of the comparatively small size of the funds coming to the EMBI yearly, I intend to invest these funds primarily in projects that are collaborative with my laboratory and those that support innovative experiments that will support the renewal of the Precision Aging Network, although I have and will continue to support Affiliate Faculty who need bridging funds for graduate students or post docs in their laboratories. In summary, I am considering engaging experts who can advise me on specific scientific or administrative questions as they arise, which will depend on the situation. These individuals may include my Associate Director, other McKnight Institute faculty or other trusted scientific colleagues, rather than a fixed Advisory Committee. I believe that this is a natural evolution of my Institute – since the pinnacle of the achievement of the Tucson EMBI will likely be the contributions I make through the Precision Aging Network, and the other basic science experiments I continue to conduct.

I hope these answers to your questions clarify the remaining issues the Trustees have about my yearly report.

Additionally, I greatly appreciate the kind words from the Trustees concerning the productivity of the Tucson EMBI – they are an enthusiastic group, and one that is truly very focused on understanding the normatively aging brain, the resulting impact on cognition, and the ways in which quality of life of older individuals can be optimized.

Sincerely,



C.A. Barnes, Ph.D.

Regents' Professor, Psychology, Neurology and Neuroscience
Evelyn F. McKnight Chair for Learning and Memory in Aging
Director, Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute
Director, Division of Neural Systems, Memory, and Aging



Organizational Chart

