

**MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MBRF)
RESEARCH COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
October 17, 2022**

The Research Committee of the MBRF was called to order at 4:00 pm EST on October 17, 2022, by Dr. Madhav Thambisetty.

The following members were present:

Dr. Madhav Thambisetty, Chair of the Research Committee, Trustee
Dr. Sue Pekarske, Trustee

The following members were absent:

Dr. Patricia Boyle, Trustee
Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF Chair
Dr. Richard Isaacson, Trustee

Others attending:

Dr. Lee Dockery, Chair Emeritus
Ms. Melanie Cianciotto, Corporate Trustee
Dr. Angelika Schlanger, Executive Director

1. Call to Order

Dr. Thambisetty welcomed the members of the committee to the call.

2. Minutes of the October 21, 2021, Meeting

The minutes of the October 21, 2021, Research Committee Meeting (Attachment 1) were reviewed and approved as amended. The changes are:

Item 4 c - Add Dr. before Farah Lubin's name, add and after COVID-19

Action Item 3 add that after recommends, bold Action Item 3

Action Item 1: The minutes of the October 21, 2021, Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended (Attachment 1).

3. Updated Activity Timeline

The committee reviewed the updated Activity Timeline (Attachment 2) for information.

4. Current Grants/Programs

a. Status – MBRF Innovators Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss

The committee discussed the Review Committee Structure for the MBRF Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss.

The MBRF Innovator Awards Committee List should show Dr. Patricia Boyle as a trustee of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation.

AFAR's timeline for announcement of the awards is very short and does not allow for review of the recommendations by the MBRF Research Committee prior to presenting to the full MBRF Board. Dr. Schlanger will reach out to AFAR to suggest they lengthen their timeline. If this is not feasible, a Research Committee meeting will be scheduled to allow time to review the recommendations and present them to the board.

The emphasis of these awards is to support both clinical translational research as well as research in understanding the basic biology of cognitive aging. The RFA clearly states that "One award will be made to support innovative studies focusing on clinical translational research and another will support innovative studies of basic biological mechanisms underlying cognitive aging and age-related memory loss."

<https://www.afar.org/grants/mcknight-award>

The committee feels that the number of clinicians and/or clinician scientists on the review committee should be increased to ensure balance between assessment of proposals under each of these two categories. While we could request AFAR to nominate such experts from among their own grantees to serve as reviewers, we may also consider going outside of AFAR to find qualified candidates to serve on the review committee.

There were four applications divided into two pools for reviewing: Basic Science and Clinical Translational. An award will be made in each category. The committee discussed how to formalize the suggestions to ensure due consideration of applicants proposing clinical translational projects.

b. Status – MBRF Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss

The committee discussed the MBRF Clinical Translational Research Scholarship (CTRS) in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss. There needs to be balance between the MBRF and non-MBRF reviewers to avoid the perception of a conflict especially when reviewing applicants from MBI candidates. The contract with the American Brain Foundation requires each application be reviewed by three reviewers. The committee discussed the lack of applications from the MBI's in this year's pool of applicants. The exact reasons for the lack of interest from the MBIs in putting forward candidates for these awards are unclear. The committee discussed whether this may be due to the

changes in the Leadership Council and whether specific discussions with council around ensuring greater participation in the Innovator and CTRS awards may be useful.

From the pool of nine applications this year at least three were focused exclusively on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). The RFA clearly states that: "the focus should NOT be solely on a neurodegenerative dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease); however, proposals that focus on a combined study of cognitive aging and neurodegenerative cognitive changes may be considered."

The committee discussed whether more prescriptive language should be added to the RFA next year to ensure compliance with this requirement. Dr. Thambisetty shared the Simon Foundation's program announcement which is very prescriptive about their guidelines and informs applicants their application will not be considered if it does not meet them. The committee feels this should be discussed in more detail at the October 27, 2022, Board of Trustees' Meeting and that the MBRF should be fair, open and transparent in what is funded.

5. Pilot Grants – Leadership Council Update

Dr. Mike Dockery has a follow-up meeting with Dr. Ron Lazar on October 20, 2022 and will provide an update on the Pilot Grants and Leadership Council at the October 27, 2022, Board of Trustees' meeting.

6. New Program Concepts

Dr. Thambisetty shared the Hevolution Foundation/AFAR Partnership (Attachment 4) with the committee. The committee discussed potential strategic partnerships with the purpose being to reach out to a more diverse talent pool of applicants and to leverage synergies with strategic partners. The committee feels the MBRF should wait until ongoing initiatives in education and public outreach are mature before reaching out to potential partners. The foundation must also be mindful about the current requirement for MBRF grantees to be located within accredited institutions within the United States.

7. Adjourn

Dr. Thambisetty asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, he called for adjournment of the meeting at 4:55 p.m. EST.

Summary of Action Items:

Action Item 1: The minutes of the October 21, 2021, Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended (Attachment 1).

Respectfully Submitted,



Melanie A. Cianciotto
Corporate Trustee