

**MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MBRF)
RESEARCH COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
March 4, 2024**

The Research Committee of the MBRF was called to order at 6:15 pm ET on March 4, 2024, by Dr. Madhav Thambisetty.

The following members were present:

Dr. Madhav Thambisetty, Chair of the Research Committee, Trustee
Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF Chair
Dr. Patricia Boyle, Trustee
Dr. Sue Pekarske, Trustee

The following members were absent:

Dr. Roy Hamilton, 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 January 29, 2024 Meeting

The minutes of the January 29, 2024, Research Committee Meeting (Attachment 1) were approved as presented.

The changes were:

Action Item 1: The minutes of the January 29, 2024, Research Committee Meeting were approved as presented (Attachment 1).

3. Updated Activity Timeline

The committee reviewed the updated Activity Timeline (Attachment 2) for information. Dr. Thambisetty noted the items that have taken place recently include planning for the Cognitive Aging Summit IV, which is well underway, and the final report that was submitted for the Reserve and Resiliency Collaboratory, which the committee previously reviewed.

4. FNIH/NIA Annual Report on the Research Partnership in Cognitive Aging

The committee received the 2023 Research Partnership in Cognitive Aging report prepared by the FNIH/NIA (Attachment 3) for information. The report provides an update from the

National Institute on Aging (NIA) on the Cognitive SuperAgers Networks, both supported through the Research Partnership in Cognitive Aging. The report also includes updates on the Mindfulness, EDucation, and EXercise for Age-Related Cognitive Decline (MEDEX) trial (now complete) continuation study, as well as two additional initiatives that stemmed from the Cognitive Aging Summit III, including the STARRS study, led by Dr. Peter Rapp of the NIA.

The committee felt the report was well put together. Dr. Thambisetty shared that these clinical trials of mindfulness, meditation and physical activity are important, but there has not been a clinical trial that has shown a real benefit of these types of interventions on cognition. Have we reached a threshold where the trials are not showing an actual clinical benefit - or are we going to keep tweaking the studies – until they do? If these interventions are repeatedly failing, at what point does the research community and the MBRF decide to focus on pursuing the study of other interventions?

5. American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) Renewal Proposal for the Innovator Awards

The committee received the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) proposal (Attachment 4). The proposal is to renew the current Innovator Awards grant for another three years to fund two three-year awards per year in the amount of \$750,000 each (total 6) with maximum of 15% indirect expenses or institutional overhead. The proposed budget represents an increase of \$11,500 in administrative costs by AFAR.

The committee discussed the proposal and agreed that the program has identified and supported an outstanding group of six scientists. The committee reached consensus that the proposal is worthy of renewal. The committee discussed the existing match requirement and alternative non-monetary forms of institutional commitment that could be accepted instead. The committee agreed that revising the monetary match requirement should be pursued to make the program more inclusive and open the eligibility to more talented researchers. Additionally, the committee recommended that eligibility requirements be expanded to include researchers who have had extenuating circumstances that led to pauses in their career and may not meet the time-specific career requirements currently listed in the RFA. The committee asked about the process to revise the RFA. Dr. Schlanger will work with AFAR to revise the current RFA and Institutional Commitment form, taking into account the survey responses related to accepted forms of institutional commitment that are non-monetary in nature.

The committee recommended approval to continue with the Innovator Awards grant and to revise the RFA and Institutional Commitment form as appropriate.

Action Item 2: The committee recommended approval to continue with the Innovator Awards grant and to revise the RFA and Institutional Commitment form as appropriate.

6. Proposal for MBRF Research Award/Prize in Collaboration with the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health

Dr. Lee Dockery presented a proposal for a annual research award/prize in collaboration with the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) intended to advance the research mission of the MBRF and to recognize and celebrate the foundation's 25th anniversary (Attachment 5). This is intended to keep advancing the MBRF's focus on research in cognitive aging and age-related memory loss.

The committee discussed the proposal and approved the concept at an award level of \$25,000, recognizing that additional administration expenses will be added. The committee also empowered Dr. Lee Dockery to carry out any necessary negotiations with Mr. David Carmel, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, FNIH related to the administrative fee, which is currently quite significant. Dr. Schlanger will invite Mr. Carmel to attend the March 19, 2024, Trustees' Meeting to make a formal presentation on the proposed research prize and related budget.

Action Item 3: The committee approves the concept of creating a research award/prize in the amount of \$25,000 in collaboration with the FNIH to recognize and celebrate the foundation's 25th anniversary and empowers Dr. Lee Dockery to carry out any necessary negations with Mr. David Carmel, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, FNIH.

Action Item 4: Dr. Schlanger will invite Mr. Carmel to attend the March 19, 2024, Trustees' Meeting to make a formal proposal.

7. American Brain Foundation 2025 RFP – Questions for Consideration

The committee reviewed the 2025 McKnight CTRS in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss Award RFP: Questions for Consideration (Attachment 6). The ABF will be producing the draft of the 2025 RFP in the coming weeks and had some recommendations for the Trustees to consider related to the eligibility requirements and the name of the award. The committee discussed proposed revisions to the RFP which included removing "progress" and replacing it with "advance" in the last bullet of the evaluation criteria, and adding additional disciplines to the eligibility requirements, with suggested language, "MD, PhD, and other related degrees" to reflect that cognitive aging researchers can represent a broad range of disciplines. Trustees recommended keeping the name of the award as is.

Action Item 5: Dr. Schlanger will share the proposed revisions to the RFA with the ABF team.

8. Adjourn

Dr. Thambisetty asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, he called for adjournment of the meeting at 7:30 p.m. ET.

Summary of Action Items:

Action Item 1: The minutes of the January 29, 2024, Research Committee Meeting were approved as presented (Attachment 1).

Action Item 2: The committee recommended approval to continue with the Innovator Awards grant and to revise the RFA and Institutional Commitment form as appropriate.

Action Item 3: The committee approves the concept of creating a research award/prize in the amount of \$25,000 in collaboration with the FNIH to recognize and celebrate the foundation's 25th anniversary and empowers Dr. Lee Dockery to carry out any necessary negotiations with Mr. David Carmel, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, FNIH.

Action Item 4: Dr. Schlanger will invite Mr. Carmel to attend the March 19, 2024, Trustees' Meeting to make a formal proposal.

Action Item 5: Dr. Schlanger will share the proposed revisions to the RFA with the ABF team.



Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie A. Cianciotto
Corporate Trustee