

MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION
COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE CALL
February 7, 2019

The McKnight Brain Research Foundation's Communications Working Group conference call began at 2:00 p.m. Eastern on February 7, 2019.

The following working group members participated in the call:

Jennifer Bizon, Ph.D., University of Florida
Christian Camargo, MD, University of Miami
J. Lee Dockery, MD, MBRF Trustee
Susan Fox-Rosellini, MBA, University of Miami
Vicki Hixon, University of Alabama Birmingham
Valerie Patmintra, Senior Communications Advisor
Amy Porter, MBRF Executive Director
Todd Taylor, University of Florida
Robert Wah, MD, MBRF Trustee

1. Roll Call and Welcome

Ms. Porter opened the call, took roll and welcomed those in attendance.

2. Review of Minutes from the January 31 Call

Ms. Porter noted that minutes from the January 31 call would be forthcoming.

3. Revised Key Messages

Ms. Porter noted that they key messages were revised to include Dr. Isaacson's suggestions and a more positive tone about cognitive aging being preventable. She also updated the messages to include hearing and vision loss as potential consequences of cognitive aging. Ms. Fox-Rosellini noted she was happy to see that overall health was also included. With no additional changes suggested, Ms. Porter moved that the current version of the messages be considered final and approved to be used for media interviews and as background information going forward.

4. Calendar of Events

Ms. Patmintra presented the shared calendar of events that was created as a Google document and talked through the process to update and add events to the calendar. After discussing the calendar, the group decided that a Google document may not be the most efficient way to track events as there may be duplicates if everyone is adding their own events. The group agreed Ms. Patmintra would manage the calendar going forward and email the group when updates are made.

5. Panel Presentation and Luncheon Media Training

Ms. Porter started the media training conversation saying that she took a leap in putting thoughts on paper to spark the discussion and that she has already received even better ideas since sharing her outline. Mr. Taylor suggested setting up the panel as a five-person panel and potentially bringing in an outside reporter from a different market to participate. He suggested inviting Lynne Anderson, the Senior Health and Medical Reporter

with The Conversation, formerly with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, to participate. He also suggested that Michelle Jaffe, UF's scientific writer and a former AP reporter, and Steve Orlando, UF's National Media Strategist, would be excellent panelists.

Dr. Dockery shared that with MBRF just embarking on its first communications program, he understands that many of the institute faculty are not very experienced with media and that it can be hard to find media spokespeople at the Institute-level. He suggested using the training as a launching platform to get buy-in on the new key messages and to train the group on what the media expects from MBI spokespeople.

Ms. Fox-Rosellini summed up the ideas discussed saying that she sees two key goals for the media training: 1. To educate the audience on how to use the key messages and 2. To leverage a journalist to educate the group on the kinds of media opportunities available, especially since a lot of papers no longer have dedicated reporters and rely on the MBIs to supply them with messages and content.

Mr. Taylor asked how the key messages would fit in the presentation and Dr. Dockery responded that on second thought, he worries presenting the key messages would take the group off-track and have them focused on editing the messages instead of learning about media best practices.

Ms. Porter clarified that the goal of the session is to demystify the media process and make it less scary by finding out directly from a journalist what the media would like to hear from the MBI scientists. Ms. Fox-Rosellini agreed the panel should be a media education seminar for a general audience, rather than focusing on the messages to convey.

Dr. Camargo said he likes the idea of a journalist participating and that it would definitely be helpful for him. Dr. Dockery noted that the session should help make it easier for the MBIs to identify experts to speak with the media going forward and create a more favorable union of journalists and scientists working together to get messages out to the public.

Dr. Dockery also mentioned that Dr. Bizon gave an excellent presentation at the 20th Anniversary celebration and that the faculty at UF is being groomed to understand the importance of talking with the media. Dr. Bizon said that as a scientist, she can admit scientists are sometimes bad at translating research to the public and it would be great to have a Foundation-level team available to help with that.

Dr. Dockery noted that it's also important to see Dr. Isaacson's video and make sure the points addressed in it are also reflected in the program. As a next step, Ms. Porter said she will get the video link from Dr. Isaacson and share it with the group. Mr. Taylor agreed, noting that it sounds like the video is a media training tool that he and Michelle Jaffe could follow by presenting information on UF's process for working with the media.

Mr. Taylor also noted that the reporter from The Conversation could help explain the challenges of distilling down information and offer tips on how scientists can best communicate with media. After looking into it internally, Mr. Taylor said it looked like a Luncheon presentation on Thursday from 12-1pm would be the best time for the media training.

6. Next Steps and Adjournment

Ms. Porter reviewed next steps on the media training session as seeing the video and that she and Ms. Patmintra would summarize the panel ideas discussed on the call and send around a revised version of the media training session outline.

Ms. Porter suggested cancelling the February 21 call and reconvening on March 7 after the MBRF Board meeting taking place February 20. Dr. Dockery and Ms. Porter then thanked the group for their participation, responsiveness and engagement and the call was adjourned at 1:58pm.

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