

MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION
COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE CALL
January 31, 2019

The McKnight Brain Research Foundation's Communications Working Group conference call began at 1:00 p.m. Eastern on January 31, 2019.

The following working group members participated in the call:

Michelle Albert, University of Arizona
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
Richard Isaacson, MD, MBRF Trustee
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. She let the group know that a lot of developments have occurred since the group's last call on October 11. Most notably, the MBRF Board voted to approve a two-year communications initiative during their October 30 meeting, which will be discussed in detail later on the call.

2. Review of Minutes from the October 11 Call

Ms. Porter then asked if anyone had changes to the October 11th call minutes that had been circulated along with the call agenda. With no changes requested to the minutes, Ms. Porter asked that they be approved and the group agreed that the October 11th call minutes were approved.

3. Progress Since Last Meeting

As mentioned in the call welcome, Ms. Porter noted that the MBRF Board approved a two-year communications plan during their October 30 meeting, which will include a website redesign, creating an organizational brochure, and implementing a social media program to highlight initiatives from both the Foundation and the MBLs. Ms. Porter noted that the MBRF Board will review proposals for the new website and to create an organizational brochure at their next meeting on February 20. She reminded the group that the idea for an organizational brochure came from the Leadership Council as they reviewed and provided feedback on the key messaging document.

Ms. Porter then asked the group to review the highlighted changes included in the key messages that were circulated to the group along with the call agenda. Dr. Camargo noted that he likes the simplicity the changes made help illustrate and that by keeping the messages simple and clear, it opens the door to talk about prevention. Dr. Isaacson asked for clarity on the message that cognitive aging cannot be prevented. Dr. Camargo responded that it comes from the National Academy of Sciences paper, which states cognitive aging happens to everyone, but changes vary widely.

Dr. Isaacson suggested changing the language to be more open-ended, saying “While it’s unclear if cognitive aging can be prevented at this time...” Ms. Porter noted that the current message comes directly from the Leadership Council saying that they will never be able to prevent cognitive aging, but said she would incorporate Dr. Isaacson’s suggested language and send a revised version of the key messages back around to the group for their use.

The group then reviewed and discussed the brochure samples shared before the call. Mr. Taylor kicked-off the discussion by sharing the impetus for the University of Florida brochure he shared, noting that they needed an overall piece explaining the Institute for its 20-year anniversary event and also to leverage for their recently launched social channels. He also noted that some of the brochure content is not evergreen and that it will need to be updated from time to time.

Ms. Porter noted that she likes the funding graph on the back of the brochure. Dr. Isaacson said he likes UF’s brochure the best of the samples shared, noting the use of imagery, story telling and overall visuals as its key highlights. Ms. Fox-Rosellini noted that each institute will need to get the brochure content and design approved through their universities and that they all have different branding, colors and logos that will need to be incorporated. Ms. Fox-Rosellini asked about the audience for the brochure and Dr. Isaacson responded that it’s for media, the public and people who attend Foundation and Institute-hosted events. Ms. Porter noted that the focus of the brochure is to highlight the collective strength of the Foundation and the Institutes and that a second, more educational and dynamic brochure will be developed later to coincide with the new website.

Ms. Porter summarized the brochure discussion saying that as a next step, the MBRF Board will review proposals and decide on a designer to work with and Ms. Patmintra will work with the selected designer to present ideas back to the group for review.

Ms. Porter then introduced the topic of creating a social media calendar and asked if creating a shared calendar everyone could contribute to would be helpful. The group liked that idea and asked Ms. Patmintra to look into options for creating a shared calendar. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Hixon both noted that their institutes would be hosting/participating in events for Brain Awareness Week and would share information on those events to be included in the shared calendar. Ms. Porter thanked them and noted that ideas for Twitter are appreciated as well.

With additional time remaining in the hour, Ms. Porter then asked Dr. Isaacson to present his ideas for hosting a media training session at the inter-institutional meeting. Dr. Isaacson said he has online training tools on communicating with the media available that could be shared in advance for participants to watch as homework. Dr. Dockery suggested the media training be presented as a luncheon or evening presentation so that all meeting participants could attend. Mr. Taylor suggested including a journalist in the media training and tailoring it to the full group as a panel discussion. Mr. Taylor said he would work with Dr. Bizon to reserve space in the program for the media training and will coordinate agenda scheduling with Drs. Cohen and Foster.

4. Next Steps and Adjournment

Ms. Porter recapped next steps from the call saying that she would send the revised messaging document back out to the group. She also reminded the group of the next call scheduled for the following Thursday from 2-3pm Eastern and said the time would be used to further build out the media training ideas and ideas for the shared calendar.

Ms. Porter thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 2:02pm.