

First Annual Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program Meeting
National Center for Research Resources (NCRR)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
October 25-28, 2001

Hosted by
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation and
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Organizers and Speakers:

Michael D. Anderson, Ph.D., Theology, Senior Minister (Retired), Westminster Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Co-Founder and Trustee of the Presbyterian Health Foundation, Member of the NIH Council of Public Representatives
William C. Angus, Ph.D., Scientific Review Administrator, Office of Review, NCRR, NIH
Carol A. Bean, Ph.D., Health Science Administrator, Extramural Programs, National Library of Medicine, NIH
Martin B. Blumsack, Scientific Program Specialist, NCRR, NIH
Sheryl K. Brining, Ph.D., Scientific Review Administrator, Office of Review, NCRR, NIH
Hans Brisch, Ph.D., Oklahoma Chancellor for Higher Education
J. Donald Capra, M.D., President, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation
Louis DePaolo, Ph.D., Program Director, Reproductive Biochemistry & Molecular Endocrinology, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH
David W. Dyer, Ph.D., Professor, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Alfred W. Gordon, Ph.D., Associate Director, Office of Minority Health and Research, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH
Irene H. Grissom, Grants Management Officer, NCRR, NIH
George M. Happ, Ph.D., Alaska EPSCoR Director, University of Alaska
James B. Hoehn, Ph.D., Chair, EPSCoR Interagency Coordinating Committee, and Head, Office of EPSCoR, National Science Foundation
The Honorable Ernest J. Istook, Jr. (R-OK), United States House of Representatives
Susan R. Kayar, Ph.D., Health Scientist Administrator, NCRR, NIH
Becky Lyon, Ph.D., Deputy Associate Director, Library Operations, National Library of Medicine, NIH
Sidney A. McNairy, Jr., Ph.D., D.Sc., Associate Director for Research Infrastructure, NCRR, NIH
Carolyn S. Pomicter, Program Analyst, Division of Research Infrastructure, NCRR, NIH
Jean'ne M. Shreeve, Ph.D., Idaho EPSCoR Director, University of Idaho
Barbara A. Spalholz, Ph.D., Program Director, Cancer Cell Biology Branch, National Cancer Institute, NIH
W. Fred Taylor, Ph.D., IDeA Program Director, NCRR, NIH
Frank J. Waxman, Ph.D., Professor, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Thursday, October 25, 2001 - Welcome Reception

Representatives of the hosting institutions welcomed all participants to the gathering and distributed registration materials.

Friday, October 26, 2001 - Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF)

Welcome and Introductions

Drs. Capra, Taylor, Dyer, and Waxman provided an overview of the Program Meeting and encouraged active participation from all IDeA-state representatives. They indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to allow NIH and IDeA-state representatives to exchange information and discuss approaches to addressing needs.

Introduction to NCRR and to the Division of Research Infrastructure (DRI)

On behalf of Judith L. Vaitukaitis, M.D., Director, NCRR, NIH, Dr. McNairy presented an overview of the NCRR, its mission and its various divisions. Dr. McNairy also gave an overview of DRI and its programs, highlighting the goals of BRIN and COBRE. For additional information see <http://www.ncrr.nih.gov/>.

IDeA Program: New Initiatives and Future Directions

Dr. Taylor described the support for the IDeA program, growing from a budget of less than \$1M at its inception in 1993, to \$135M in the President's 2002 budget proposal. He indicated that the numbers and dollar amounts of awards for COBRE and BRIN would be a function of the fiscal year 2002 Congressional appropriation for IDeA. Presently, the House and Senate marks for the IDeA Program are \$135M and \$200M, respectively. Feedback from this meeting will contribute to the future directions for the program.

COBRE Program and Project Evaluation

Ms. Pomicter gave an overview of evaluation procedures, especially as they pertain to the COBRE program. She indicated that there would be a formal evaluation of each institution's program in meeting its stated goals. She highlighted the roles of both formative and summative elements in the evaluation process. On an annual basis, program staff and the External Advisory Committees for each program will monitor the progress of the individual research projects.

Review Criteria and Grants Management Processes

Ms. Grissom, Dr. Angus and Dr. Brining discussed various aspects of grants management and scientific review of BRIN and COBRE applications, with tips for effective application assembly and submission. Review considerations that are particularly important to BRIN proposals are: the significance of the network to enhancing the research capacity of the network institutions, the approach to be followed to meet program goals, the innovation in the design of the program, the suitability of the administrative structure, and the strengths of the research environment. Review considerations that are particularly important to COBRE proposals include: the extent to which the research objectives of the program are likely to be met, the qualifications of the Principal Investigator (must be an established researcher), the scientific merit of the projects, the career development plans for junior investigators, the appropriateness of existing and planned infrastructure to support the project, and evidence of institutional commitment.

Keynote Address

Congressman Istook exhorted the members of the biomedical research community to be vibrant in their presentation of the significance of their research to public health. He indicated that with the recent tragic events and fears of bioterrorism, public health is in the public eye now more than ever. Rep. Istook recommended that researchers take a proactive role in their scientific missions by maintaining contact with the public health community and disseminating their research as broadly as possible.

NIH Extramural Associates (EA) Program

Dr. DePaolo, a former member of the EA Advisory Board, gave an overview of the EA Program. The mission of the EA Program is to increase the participation of institutions primarily serving women and minorities in biomedical training and research. The program offers mentorship and training in grantsmanship, and also provides support for pilot research projects. As indicated in the BRIN RFA, participating institutions are encouraged to utilize the EA Program to develop expanded capability of pre- and post-award management.

NSF EPSCoR Program

Dr. Hoehn described the mission of the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitiveness in Research (EPSCoR), which is similar to that of the IDeA program: namely, to promote scientific research in states that historically have had low success in obtaining NSF grant support. The list of EPSCoR and IDeA states are nearly identical. Dr. Hoehn presented graphics illustrating the success of the program in terms of a slow rise over time in NSF grant scores from the participating institutions.

Round-Table Discussions

1. Program Administration and Grants Management

Resource Panel: Ms. Grissom, Dr. Angus, and Dr. Brining

Participants included both grantees and prospective applicants. They had an opportunity to ask specific questions regarding the application and review process, carryover of funds, rebudgeting, and other pre- and post-award issues that were specific to their particular circumstances.

2. Scientific Program Interaction with Representatives from NIH Institutes and Centers

Resource Panel: Dr. Gordon, Dr. Spalholz, Dr. DePaolo, Dr. Taylor, and Dr. Kayar

The panelists described the opportunities available to participants through the various NIH Institutes and Centers they represented. They also provided website addresses, flyers, and other contact information. Participants were interested in discussing upcoming IDeA postings, new IDeA grant opportunities and the future of the program, the importance of junior investigators competing for RO1 funding during the IDeA granting period, reorganization of some NIH study sections, co-funding initiatives, inclusion of researchers from IDeA states on NIH study sections, and time commitments of BRIN mentors.

3. Bioinformatics/Networks

Resource Panel: Dr. McNairy, Dr. Lyon, and Dr. Bean

The representatives of the National Library of Medicine (NLM; <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>) presented an overview of what the NLM has to offer to biomedical researchers. Among the many services they provide, there are web links to health information such as MedlinePlus (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>), library services such as data bases and catalogs, research programs in medical informatics, announcements of new library offerings, and general information on the library and its staff. The NLM has a nation-wide network of regional libraries that provides many services to biomedical researchers.

The discussion centered on the fact that bioinformatics can encompass a wide variety of topics, based on the individual needs of each research program. With the rapid growth of the new life science technologies such as genomics and proteomics, it is becoming increasingly important to stay informed of the most advanced bioinformatics tools. Some participants called the group's attention to an online tutorial from a bioinformatics course taught at the University of Kentucky (<http://biology.uky.edu/520/>).

A decision was made to hold a BRIN bioinformatics meeting for the Bioinformatics Core Directors to strengthen the bioinformatics infrastructure at their institutions. This 2-day workshop will be held in or near Santa Fe, New Mexico, in late February or early March 2002. Organizing committee members are: Dr. Kevin Facemyer (University of Nevada at Reno, facemyer@unr.edu), Dr. Paul Kelly (University of Kansas, ptkelly@ukans.edu), Dr. Ruth Riley (University of South Carolina, ruth@med.sc.edu), Dr. Chuck Staben

(University of Kentucky, staben@uky.edu), and Dr. Karl Steiner (Delaware Biotechnology Institute, steiner@dbi.udel.edu).

Other topics discussed at this session included the need to improve access to library resources such as PubMed; the importance of comparing notes regarding hardware platforms for housing large databases; the pros and cons of commercially-available software versus freeware; and the need to develop new educational programs in bioinformatics for faculty and students.

4. Methods/Approaches to Formative and Summative Program Evaluation

Resource Panel: Mr. Blumsack and Ms. Pomicter

The panelists presented some of the criteria that may be used to monitor the changes in process and content at an institution over the course of the funding period. Discussion centered on the following issues: benchmarks and evaluation data such as publications and new proposals, the crucial roles of the Internal and External Advisory Committees in assessing progress, the importance of subproject researchers' Progress Report submissions; and the importance of continuous planning for the future by the institution and by individual researchers.

After-Dinner Program - "Accepting the Challenge of the Blue Fairy"

Introduction by Dr. Brisch, Speaker: Dr. Anderson

According to Dr. Anderson, the Blue Fairy offers to Pinocchio the opportunity to be a Real Boy. But she also warns him that this gift of being freed from the puppeteer's control carries with it the burden of responsibility for his actions. Likewise, biomedical researchers who wish to accept the challenge of pursuing their own courses of independent and creative research must acknowledge their responsibility to the public that makes the funding available. He illustrated this idea with examples of issues currently facing the NIH.

Saturday, October 27, 2001 – University of Oklahoma Health Science Center (OUHSC)

COBRE Poster Session

Abstracts for the 21 poster presentations were published in the program handout at the meeting. Copies may be obtained on request from Dr. Susan Kayar (kayars@ncrr.nih.gov).

IDeA Strategic Planning Discussion

Panel: Dr. McNairy, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Waxman, Dr. Happ, and Dr. Shreeve

This panel met with participants to discuss the goals of the IDeA program in the short and long term. The fraction of the NIH total budget that is spent on the IDeA program is small compared to the fraction of the NSF total budget that is spent on the EPSCoR program. Participants were urged to contemplate what could be done with increased funding; they agreed that core research facilities were their highest funding priority. The special problems faced by researchers in Alaska were described, all of which are related to their location; recruiting students and completing building projects were emphasized. A suggestion was made that a third IDeA mechanism should be established, addressing co-funding mechanisms. Discussion topics from participants at this session included the following: hard versus soft money faculty positions, and the possible role of NIH in advocating release time on behalf of faculty; the conflicting funding demands for basic science versus applied biomedical research; the program significance of mentoring grantsmanship; the need for an NCCR website with links to all the IDeA programs; the importance of IDeA funding recipients citing their support in all their publications and presentations; the advantages of having IDeA grantees serving on

NIH review groups; the perception of IDeA programs in the eyes of the rest of the biomedical research community; and IDeA funding priorities.

Plenary Session: Participant Feedback on IDeA Program Issues and Future Directions

Panelists: Dr. McNairy and Dr. Taylor

Participants were interested in the following issues: upcoming funding opportunities; the establishment of collaborations between IDeA states; the inclusion of veterinary science departments in the IDeA program; co-funding by the IDeA program for R01 projects submitted to other NIH programs; the possibility of funding by the NCCR for small, investigator-initiated proposals in IDeA states; the potential impact on IDeA states by NCCR's Science Education Program; possible venues for future IDeA meetings; the need to be continuously proactive in obtaining future funding; the possibility of offering alteration and renovation funding; the need for equitable distribution of BRIN funding among all participating institutions; the role of the planning phase of the BRIN project; and the national perception of the IDeA program, as described in *Science* (21 Sept. 2001, 293:2195 and 28 Sept. 2001, 293:2364).

Sunday, October 28, 2001

The Directors and staffs of the two conference host sites provided participants tours of the OMRF and OUHSC COBRE research facilities.