

**MINUTES OF THE
MARYLAND STEM CELL RESEARCH COMMISSION**
Monday, July 12, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Members:

Scott Bailey
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Diane Hoffman
Haig Kazazian
Debra Mathews, Chair
David Mosser
Linda Powers
Avram Reisner
Ira Schwartz
Curt Van Tassell, Vice Chair
Bowen Weisheit

Staff:

Stephen Auvil, TEDCO
Amritha Jaishankar, MSCRF/TEDCO
Terry Rauh, TEDCO
Sabrina Spinner, MSCRF/TEDCO
Jody Sprinkle, TEDCO
Troy Stovall, TEDCO

The Commission meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the May 4, 2021 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Executive Director Report

Dr. Amritha Jaishankar presented the Executive Director's Report, which focused on the following:

A. Operational Updates

MSCRF/TEDCO is fully operational, working remotely, and working out of the office as needed. Most meetings will continue to be held virtually or via teleconference until further notice.

B. Awardee Updates

The awards for the FY'21 second funding cycle were announced and the grant agreements were drafted and released. We are continuously engaged with our current awardees through individual meetings and various cohorts regarding research activities, milestone progress, budgets, and project timelines.

C. FY 2022 RFAs (1st Funding Cycle Only)

The FY'22 RFAs for the Clinical, Validation, Commercialization programs were released (1st funding cycle only). The application deadline is July 15, 2021. The Scientific Review Committee will review the applications in August 2021 and the Commission Review meeting will be held in Sept 2021.

D. Conference Updates

Dr. Jaishankar indicated her participation at the World Stem Cell Summit Virtual conference (held June 14-18, 2021) on behalf of the Fund and the Commission.

E. Other

Dr. Jaishankar indicated that since January 2021, several MSCRF awarded companies issued press releases, highlighting newly developed partnerships and funds raised to advance medical innovation, treatments, and cures (local and globally).

III. Government Relations - Update

Ms. Jody Sprinkle provided a brief overview of the State budget cycle and the legislative process. Ms. Sprinkle indicated that TEDCO will receive a target budget for FY'23 from the MD Dept. of Budget and Management (DBM), within the next month. She will keep Dr. Jaishankar and the Commission informed on any new details regarding the MSCRF annual budget and/or relevant bills during the current budget and legislative cycle.

IV. TEDCO's Budget and Accounting - Update

Mr. Terry Rauh provided a brief overview of TEDCO's budget and accounting updates since the March 2021 Commission meeting. Mr. Rauh indicated that TEDCO undertook a rapid assessment of the accounting and information technology systems. One of the key findings of the assessment revealed that the existing accounting and information systems are not conducive to effective reporting. In response, TEDCO Management has begun to reengineer the current systems, particularly TEDCO's chart of accounts, for effective internal/external reporting.

During the discussion, the Commission raised a number of questions and recurring concerns regarding indirect costs charged to the MSCRF annual budget that are unrelated to administering the Fund. The Commission asked TEDCO Management to address the issues within a reasonable timeframe. Mr. Troy Stovall indicated his desire to work with the Commission to resolve the allocation issues.

V. Review Bioethics Governance of Grants

Dr. Mathews emphasized the importance of MSCRF applicants providing detailed information on ethical issues relevant to their proposed research. The current required fields and responses were discussed. The Commission will work with Dr. Jaishankar to evaluate any changes required to the application portal for continued bioethics review and governance.

VI. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Discussion

The Commission revisited the ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion discussion. There were a number of direct and indirect barriers that continue to affect the ability to target specific demographics. While the Commission fully supports this effort, there was a consensus not to compromise the quality of the research funded or the reviewers who help with the process. The Commission remains committed to supporting diversity in diseases, diversity in cell lines, and studying diseases that have a disproportionate impact on underrepresented populations.

The Commission brainstormed several ideas and expressed interest in continuing its work to improve diversity and inclusion in the grant process. Over the next several months, Dr. Jaishankar will help synthesize the top ideas to help develop an implementation plan for this initiative.

VI. Statement for Closing the Meeting

A motion was made and seconded that the Commission go into closed session. The motion stated the following:

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION:

GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE §3-103(a)(1)(i): This subtitle does not apply to ... a public body when it is carrying out ... an administrative function.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED: The discussion will concern the performance of the Commission's role in overseeing the operation of the MSCRF, and the duty to oversee the use of budgeted MSCRF funds for various administrative purposes, including but not limited to marketing and business development functions and other costs charged to the Commission for administering the MSCRF.

REASON FOR CLOSING: The Commission believes that confidentiality is essential to enable candid discussion of the process by which it oversees the uses of the aforementioned MSCRF funds.

General Provisions Article §3-108(a)(1)(ii): A public body may adjourn an open session to discuss "any . . . personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals".

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED: The discussion will include the job duties and title of one or more individuals in helping the Commission carry out its duties as regards the MSCRF.

REASON FOR CLOSING: The Commission believes that confidentiality may be beneficial to a candid discussion of the job duties and title of the aforementioned individual(s).

The motion passed unanimously. The Commission went into a closed session at 3:28 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.