

Empire State Stem Cell Board
Funding Committee Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2013

The Funding Committee of the Empire State Stem Cell Board held a meeting on Thursday, October 3, 2013, at the offices of the Department of Health, 90 Church Street, New York, New York. Commissioner Nirav Shah, M.D., M.P.H., presided as Chair.

Funding Committee Members Present:

Dr. Nirav Shah, Chair
Dr. Bradford Berk*
Dr. David Hohn *
Dr. Mario Loomis
Dr. Samuel Packer
Dr. Allen Spiegel, Vice Chair
Dr. Melissa Wasserstein
Dr. Madelyn Wils**
*participated via video-conference
**participated via teleconference

Funding Committee Members Absent:

Mr. Robin Elliott

Department of Health Staff Present:

Ms. Bonnie Brautigam
Dr. Kathy Chou
Ms. Janet Cohn
Dr. Matthew Kohn

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Shah called the meeting to order and welcomed members, staff and the public. He then asked members and staff to introduce themselves. Following introductions, Dr. Shah turned the floor over to Dr. Chou to review current stem cell facilities in the state, as background to consideration of applications for the third round of such funding.

Presentation: Current New York State Stem Cell Facilities

Dr. Chou reminded members that in 2009, NYSTEM made eight awards pursuant to the first Shared Facilities for Stem Cell Research (Shared Facilities) Request for Applications (RFA), and, in 2011, made an additional seven awards pursuant to the second Shared Facilities RFA. Of the Round One awards, five had ended and three were in No Cost Extensions. Round Two facilities were half-way through their awards.

Dr. Chou noted that most of the awards fell into one of three categories: pluripotent stem cell facilities, shared equipment and imaging facilities, and specialized stem cell facilities. The specialized facilities, some of which were quite unique, included the Regenerative Research Foundation's Neuro-Bank, Columbia's High-Throughput Screening and Medicinal Chemistry Facility, the New York University's shRNA and siRNA Screening Facility, and the University of Rochester's cGMP Facility. Two additional facilities at Columbia were funded earlier under the Board's original Launch Awards.

Of the previous awardee institutions eligible for renewed facility funding, Dr. Chou noted that six had applied under the current Round Three RFA.

Executive Session

Dr. Shah asked committee members for a motion to go to executive session to discuss the evaluations of applications submitted in response to the third round RFA for Shared Facilities for Stem Cell Research. Dr. Spiegel so moved and Dr. Packer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Brautigam reminded members of the evaluation criteria set forth in the RFA and described the peer review evaluation and scoring process. The Committee was then provided with information relating to the individual applications while members with a potential conflict of interest left the room.

Dr. Shah then asked for a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene in public. Dr. Wasserstein so moved and Dr. Packer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Recommendations for Shared Facilities for Stem Cell Research

Dr. Shah advised the Committee that the next order of business would be to vote on applications for Shared Facilities for Stem Cell Research awards.

Ms. Cohn provided an overview of the evaluation process and criteria. She noted for the record that Ms. Wils had joined the meeting but was participating by teleconference because of video-conferencing equipment failure.

Ms. Cohn announced the application number, name of the sponsoring institution, name of the principal investigator, and the recommended funding amount for each application as set forth below.

There were no recusals for the first application:

Application Number	Sponsoring Institution	PI Name	Recommended Funding
13S-011	Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center	Mark Tomishima	\$3,508,315

Dr. Packer moved to recommend approval of the award in the amount recommended. Dr. Spiegel seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dr. Spiegel recused himself from consideration of the second application and left the room.

N13S-008	Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Paul Frenette	\$3,557,019
----------	-------------------------------------	---------------	-------------

Dr. Wasserstein moved to recommend approval of the award in the recommended amount and Dr. Packer seconded. The motion passed and Dr. Spiegel returned to the room.

The Committee then considered the third application, for which there were no recusals:

N13S-002	Cornell University	John Schimenti	\$3,027,175
----------	--------------------	----------------	-------------

Dr. Wasserstein moved to recommend approval of the awards. Dr. Packer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dr. Shah recused himself on the next application and left the room, while Dr. Spiegel presided.

N13S-004	Weill Medical College	Todd Evans	\$3,334,348
----------	-----------------------	------------	-------------

Dr. Wasserstein moved to recommend approval and Dr. Packer seconded. The motion passed and Dr. Shah returned to the room.

The Committee considered the next application, for which there were no recusals:

N13S-009	Regenerative Research Foundation	Christopher Fasano	\$2,299,970
----------	----------------------------------	--------------------	-------------

Dr. Packer so moved, Dr. Wasserstein seconded, and the motion passed.

The Committee then considered the last application for which sufficient funding remained, again with no recusals:

N13S-006	Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene	Rene Hen	\$3,078,827
----------	--	----------	-------------

Dr. Wasserstein so moved, Dr. Packer seconded, and the motion passed.

Finally, the Committee considered recommending funding of one more application for the remaining amount, which was less than had been requested. There were no recusals.

N13S-005	Columbia University	Lewis Brown	\$1,194,346
----------	---------------------	-------------	-------------

A motion was made, seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes for the May 21, 2013, Funding Committee Meeting

Dr. Shah directed members to the draft minutes of the May 21, 2013, meeting of the Funding Committee and asked for a motion to approve them. Dr. Wasserstein so moved and Dr. Spiegel seconded. The motion passed.

Presentation: Recent Stem Cell Research Conferences & Consortia Oversight Kickoff Meetings

Dr. Kohn advised members that he and Dr. Chou had attended the 11th annual meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) in June. He mentioned that many NYSTEM-funded scientists were there and that several had been selected as speakers, including Dr. Elaine Fuchs, who gave a memorial lecture on skin stem cells. Dr. Kohn stated that a number of NYSTEM-funded Shared Facilities, along with stem cell facilities from outside of New York, had formed a consortium to share protocols, expertise and experiences. He noted that the consortium held a very popular session and featured a booth, which distributed literature and prominently displayed the NYSTEM logo.

Dr. Kohn then turned to the subject of the three NYSTEM-funded Consortia to Accelerate Therapeutic Applications of Stem Cells (Consortia). He reminded members that at their request, staff had established an independent oversight panel for each funded Consortium to review that Consortium's workplans, monitor progress, and make recommendations regarding future direction, including "go/no-go" decisions and changes in aims and investigators. Dr. Kohn reported that staff has held kickoff meetings for all three funded Consortia, and that while it is still early in the process, the panels have been well-informed, actively engaged, and have made excellent recommendations, especially on methods to streamline the Consortia and focus them on their respective goals.

Program Updates

Ms. Brautigam reported that NYSTEM has issued 18 RFAs, resulting in approximately \$259 million in awards. She directed members to a handout listing the outstanding approved RFAs and asked whether they wanted to adjust the order of issuance.

Members noted that public perception of the program would hinge substantially on the delivery of translational therapies resulting from Consortia, and further stressed the importance of the investigator-initiated research awards, as well as educational efforts.

Dr. Hohn proposed reserving funds for the second round of Consortia, given the potential impact on the long-term health of New Yorkers. He added that teacher training was most important of the three educational initiatives. Several members voiced agreement.

Dr. Shah asked for a motion to move the second Consortia RFA, followed by the second Teacher Training RFA, to the top of the list, but to leave the remaining items in the original order. Dr. Spiegel so moved and Dr. Packer seconded. The motion passed.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Funding Committee meeting. It passed unanimously.

*s/ Janet Cohn
Executive Secretary to the
Empire State Stem Cell Board
Approved: February 13, 2014*