

Empire State Stem Cell Board
Funding Committee Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2014

The Funding Committee of the Empire State Stem Cell Board held a meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2014, 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 R. Shah, Chairperson
Dr. Bradford Berk*
Mr. Robin Elliott
Dr. David Hohn*
Dr. Samuel Packer*
Dr. Allen Spiegel, Vice Chair
Dr. Melissa Wasserstein
Ms. Madelyn Wils
*via videoconference

Funding Committee Members Absent:

Dr. Mario Loomis

Department of Health Staff Present:

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

Observers Present:

Mr. Lawrence Chan
Ms. Iona Voiculescu

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Shah called the meeting to order and welcomed members, staff and the public. He thanked members for coming in during a snow storm and apprised them of recent accomplishments at the Department of Health. He then asked members and staff to introduce themselves.

Motion to Approve Minutes of October 3, 2013 Meeting

Dr. Shah asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Funding Committee meeting held on October 3, 2013. Dr. Packer so moved and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Dr. Shah asked committee members for a motion to go into executive session to discuss the evaluations of applications submitted in response to the fourth round Request for Applications (RFA) for Investigator-Initiated Research Projects (IIRPs) and Innovative Developmental or Exploratory Activities (IDEAs). Dr. Spiegel so moved and Dr. Packer seconded. The motion passed.

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. Elliott so moved, the motion was seconded and passed.

Public Session

Recommendations for IIRPs and IDEAs

Dr. Shah advised the Committee that the next order of business would be voting on award recommendations for IIRPs and IDEAs.

Ms. Brautigam provided an overview of the evaluation process and criteria.

Each application, in the order set forth below, was announced and considered individually. Any Committee member with a conflict of interest with respect to the application under consideration left the room. A Committee member then moved to approve the application and another seconded the motion. After discussion, if any, each motion passed unanimously. The recommended applications were:

App. Number	PI Name	Organization	Conflict	Type
N13G-054	Fuchs, Elaine V.	The Rockefeller University		IIRP
N13G-098	Christiano, Angela M.	Columbia University		IDEA
N13G-263	Guo, Wenjun	Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Spiegel	IIRP
N13G-071	Nance, Jeremy F.	New York University School of Medicine		IIRP
N13G-262	Frenette, Paul S.	Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Spiegel	IIRP

N13G-171	Dubois, Nicole C.	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IDEA
N13G-178	Xu, Pin-Xian	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IIRP
N13G-169	Ehrlich, Michelle E.	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IDEA
N13G-276	Bernstein, Emily	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IIRP
N13G-281	Rendl, Michael	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IIRP
N13G-160	Chaudhry, Hina W.	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IIRP
N13G-255	Enikolopov, Grigori	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory		IIRP
N13G-033	Noble, Mark D.	University of Rochester	Berk	IIRP
N13G-268	Que, Jianwen	University of Rochester	Berk	IDEA
N13G-086	Mayer-Proschel, Margot	University of Rochester	Berk	IDEA
N13G-043	Hsu, Wei	University of Rochester	Berk	IIRP
N13G-084	Xing, Lianping	University of Rochester	Berk	IDEA
N13G-083	Zhang, Yi	University of Rochester	Berk	IDEA
N13G-076	Stadtfeld, Matthias	New York University School of Medicine		IDEA
N13G-058	Littman, Dan R.	New York University School of Medicine		IDEA
N13G-119	Kass, Robert S.	Columbia University		IIRP
N13G-063	Ito, Mayumi	New York University School of Medicine		IDEA
N13G-275	Tsang, Stephen H.	Columbia University		IIRP
N13G-009	Lee, Siu Sylvia	Cornell University		IDEA
N13G-155	Karayiorgou, Maria	New York State Psychiatric Institute		IIRP

N13G-236	Hadjantonakis, Anna-Katerina	Sloan-Kettering Institute		IIRP
N13G-060	Basilico, Claudio	New York University School of Medicine		IIRP
N13G-127	Leibel, Rudolph L. and Egli, Dieter	Columbia University		IDEA
N13G-228	Huangfu, Danwei	Sloan-Kettering Institute		IIRP
N13G-022	Buchon, Nicolas	Cornell University		IDEA
N13G-115	Liu, Kang	Columbia University		IIRP
N13G-027	Feng, Jian	SUNY Buffalo		IIRP
N13G-107	Lu, Helen H.	Columbia University		IDEA
N13G-023	Shen, Xiling	Cornell University		IDEA

Dr. Shah then indicated that no further funds remained but asked the Committee to consider additional applications to award but not fund. He noted that if funds became available the awards would be made in score order, unless there remained only enough for an IDEA, in which case NYSTEM staff would skip an IIRP to reach a lower-scoring IDEA.

Voting proceeded again in the same manner and the following applications were designated Awarded not Funded:

App. Number	PI Name	Organization	Conflict	Type
N13G-154	Hen, Rene	New York State Psychiatric Institute		IIRP
N13G-065	Aifantis, Iannis	New York University School of Medicine		IIRP
N13G-031	Gronostajski, Richard M.	SUNY Buffalo		IIRP
N13G-034	Bulger, Michael	University of Rochester	Berk	IIRP
N13G-136	Bouhassira, Eric E.	Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Spiegel	IIRP

N13G-072	Sfeir, Agnel	New York University School of Medicine		IDEA
N13G-175	Hoffman, Ronald H.	Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Wasserstein	IIRP
N13G-232	Shi, Song-Hai	Sloan-Kettering Institute		IIRP

Ms. Brautigam then summed up, noting that out of 281 applications, the Funding Committee had recommended 34, for a total of \$24,893,522. Eight were awarded but not funded.

Of the 34 applications recommended, fifteen were IDEAs and nineteen were IIRPs. Thirty-eight came from early stage investigators, of which nine were funded. In total, 30 applications were resubmissions, of which 13 were funded.

Following the voting, the Committee agreed to make two changes to the peer review process for future RFAs. The first was to remove the option for peer reviewers to recommend budget contingencies, which no longer appeared to be needed, as the reviewers had learned to score budgets more effectively, as required by New York State law. The second -- in the case of RFAs for which numerous applications were expected, like today's, for which roughly three times as many were submitted as could be funded -- was to raise the peer review triage score and the cutoff for Committee review to 2.9.

Presentation: Stimulus Triggered Acquisition of Pluripotency (STAP) Cells

Dr. Chou gave the Committee a brief presentation on the work that had just been reported in the journal *Nature* about a remarkable process to create pluripotent stem cells.¹ Researchers had placed adult mouse cells into an acidic condition for 30 minutes and obtained totipotent cells, which they referred to as STAP cells. If the work could be replicated and performed successfully with human cells it had the potential to transform the field, as it was simpler and more cost-effective than induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs) or Somatic Cell Nuclear Transplantation (SCNT). Labs around the world were reportedly already trying to replicate the results. But, as Dr. Chou concluded, “seeing [would be] believing.”

¹ This paper was subsequently retracted by its authors when the work could not be replicated and problems emerged about the underlying work.

Program Updates

Ms. Brautigam reported that NYSTEM has issued 19 RFAs, resulting in approximately \$259 million in awards. She noted that seven pending shared facilities contracts and today's recommendations for IIRPs and IDEAs would bring that figure to \$302 million.

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: October 31, 2014*