

Dean's Council (DC)

January 15, 2007

Minutes

Present: Dr. Ford, Dr. Garibaldi, Dr. Gould, Dr. Jacob, Dr. Koeppen, Dr. Lalande, Dr. Nissen, Dr. Pappano, Dr. Simon

Excused: Dr. Albertsen, Dr. Arnold, Dr. Deckers, Mr. Gillon, Dr. Kenny

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m.

1. The minutes of the January 3, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. The Department of Cell Biology review report was discussed. Review team members in attendance were Drs. Peter Setlow and Debra Kendall (by phone). Department members who attended were Drs. Laurinda Jaffe, Timothy Hla, and Leslie Loew. Dr. Koeppen explained that the DC's task is to make recommendations to the Dean regarding the department based on the written documents and information provided at today's meeting. After answering questions, the review team and department members will be excused. The meeting was then opened up to questions.

The major recommendation in the report was that the institution should commit to recruiting a permanent Chair of the Department of Cell Biology and, in order to do so, address space issues and resources for additional positions. It was noted that one of the realities currently faced by the institution is a lack of both space and resources. Further, a significant amount of space would not be available for 4-5 years due to the time needed to renovate and occupy Farmtech and to then complete renovations of the L Building. In addition, the availability of resources to hire additional faculty depends on the success in funding the academic gap. The review team was asked what they would recommend the School do in the interim. Dr. Kendall responded that the review team felt recruitment of an outside chair was critical. While she understands that a successful search may take up to a year, she hopes the search could be conducted before the fourth year. She also indicated that it was the team's impression that the Farmtech facility would be ready to be occupied within 18 months and did not factor into their thinking an additional 18 months to move. She expressed her concern that if recruitment of a chair is delayed 4-5 years, other issues may arise during that time which will cause further delays, and recruitment may never occur. Dr. Setlow added that the team felt recruitment of a chair could not be envisioned unless adequate space was available. Dr. Jaffe noted the need to also have available resources required to recruit not just a department chair but probably five additional faculty, which she believes an external chair would expect as part of the recruitment package. The DC was urged to find a creative way to overcome the space problem.

It was noted that some existing research space is not being used to its full capacity; however, it was also noted that there are other competing initiatives for all space that becomes available. Dr. Jaffe was asked whether the recruitments she referenced would be hired into the general Department of Cell Biology or into the various centers. She responded that some of the positions would be affiliated with centers, but others might not be. She noted the significant resources that have been very successfully invested in the centers and believes that the biggest need currently is to rebuild the vitality of the general department. She imagines a less tightly focused growth of the department and envisions creation of a general medical sciences component. She believes this structure is supportable from a financial and science point of view. Dr. Kendall added that the general feeling of the review team was that strengthening the department was very important as a way to bring balance to the centers and the department and how they interact. A question was raised regarding how many research in-residence faculty will become core solid members of the department (i.e. will become independent, get promoted, and possibly transfer to tenure track positions). Both Drs. Hla and Loew indicated they have faculty working within their centers for whom this has either occurred or could very likely occur. Dr. Koeppen asked Drs. Kendall and Setlow what was meant by the following statement in the review report: "While the review team does not have sufficient information to make an explicit recommendation regarding reorganization, linkage with the Genetics and Developmental Biology Department may be possible provided the department is fully engaged in discussion regarding this option." They explained that the review team heard there were talks about this possibility and thought it should be explored, and that the Cell Biology Department should be fully involved in the discussions. The close interaction between Cell Biology faculty with those in the Genetics Department was noted, as well as the synergy between the stem cell initiative and various elements of cell biology. There was general agreement that strategically this is an option that could be considered. The importance of using the strategic plan process as a way to articulate such plans was stressed. The guests were then excused.

Discussion ensued. The general consensus of the DC was that it is not in the long-term best interest of the School to recruit a chair and five positions for the Department of Cell Biology. It was decided that Dr. Koeppen would draft a recommendation to Dr. Deckers proposing that as part of the Research Strategic Plan process, consideration be given to integrating the Departments of Cell Biology and Genetics and Developmental Biology into a single department, or some other appropriate configuration. Further, they will recommend that Dr. Jaffe continue to serve as the Interim Chair while this is being explored. It was noted that this would require a waiver from the School of Medicine Bylaws, which allow interim chairs to

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only serve two years. Finally, in response to concerns raised by the review team regarding the department's educational responsibilities, the DC agreed that these could be fulfilled by faculty in other departments, and perhaps other Schools within the University, similar to what was recommended for the Department of Pharmacology. Dr. Koeppen will circulate the draft recommendation to the DC for comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Donatelli