



Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment Standing Committee on Grants Meeting Minutes October 7, 2024

The following board members appointed by the CARE Board of Directors currently comprise the Standing Committee on Grants: Cliff Berkman, Thomas Brown, Nancy Davidson, Beth Lawlor, Libby Mongue-Wymore.

Committee Members Present and Constituting a Quorum: Cliff Berkman, Thomas Brown, Beth Lawlor

Committee Members Not Present: Nancy Davidson, Libby Mongue-Wymore

CARE Fund Staff Attendees: Laura Flores Cantrell, Peter Choi, Tasha Florez, Pam Fujita-Yuhas, Joseph Sparacio.

Guest Attendees: Sandra Adix (Department of Commerce).

Monday October 7, 2024, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. (PT)

1. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. A quorum was confirmed by Laura Flores Cantrell. Peter Choi presented the Summary of Key Action Items for the Committee.

2. Implementation and Outcomes Research Review Panels Appointment

Peter Choi introduced the first agenda item, the review and appointment of reviewer candidates for the Implementation and Outcomes Research grants. Peter provided a review of the statutory requirements under RCW 43.348.050. The statute requires an independent expert scientific review and advisory committee for the purpose of evaluating grant proposals for cancer research and recommending grants be appointed by the board; the independent expert scientific review and advisory committee must consist of individuals with nationally recognized expertise in the scientific, clinical, ethical, commercial, and regulatory aspects of cancer research, prevention, and care.

Peter then asked Pam Fujita-Yuhas to present the information regarding the candidates for the independent expert scientific review and advisory committee. AIBS proposed candidates for two review panels: Panel 1: Screening, Detection, and Treatment Research and Panel 2: Population Health Research.

Pam noted project summaries and the anonymized biosketches of the reviewer candidates were included in the meeting materials and asked the Committee to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Peter clarified all panelists proposed by AIBS were from outside the state of Washington to minimize the potential for conflicts of interest. No conflicts were declared. A discussion of the proposed panel candidates followed.

MOTION: Thomas Brown made a motion to appoint the reviewer candidates to the scientific review committee as presented by AIBS to review the applications to the Implementation and Outcomes Research RFP, with the additional request to AIBS that all four reviewers for Panel 2: Population Health Research review all four applications in that panel. Beth Lawlor seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Scientific Discoveries Research RFP

Tasha Florez presented the materials for the Scientific Discoveries Research RFP, noting an overview of the RFP was presented at the August 14, 2024 board meeting and staff incorporated that information into the full Draft Scientific Discoveries RFP included in the committee materials.

Tasha noted staff is particularly seeking the Committee's guidance for the following two items:

1. To help ensure diversity of CARE Fund grantee organizations, should the maximum number of applications eligible per organization revert to three applications per organization from five per organization?
2. Applicants are required to submit proof of their secured non-state match, one-to-one (1:1), to requested grant funds. The Draft RFP states, "[a]t CARE Fund's sole discretion, applications that fail to sufficiently demonstrate the non-state match funds requirements (e.g., nonstate source, availability of the match for grant period, etc.), may be determined ineligible and not advanced for review." This is proposed as additional language so applicants that do not meet the eligibility criterion (i.e., have a plan for matching funds or pending matching funds without a secured match) are not considered for a grant.

A committee discussion followed. Committee members noted the goal for CARE Fund is to fund the best science so having five applications per organization could help ensure a larger competitive pool. A question was raised about whether different campuses of the same academic institution counted towards that institution's application limit. Peter Choi clarified that the limit is based on the tax identification number associated with the organization submitting the application.

[Sandra Adix joined the meeting at 2:34 p.m.]

Committee members noted researchers must go to their institutions to approve match requirements. Therefore, having a match secured in the application is information that is regularly tracked.

Committee members asked whether the minimum level of funding is an obstacle to obtaining a match and whether having a funding level minimum of \$250,000 might be too high for some projects and researchers whose needs for funding are lower or who might struggle to spend the grant award and matching funds in the allotted time period.

MOTION: Thomas Brown made a motion to recommend the CARE Board approve maintaining a limit of five applications per organization and include language in the RFP regarding proof of the required non-state match is secured, as presented. Cliff Berkman seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

4. Breakthrough Research Continued Funding Decision Appeal of Continued Funding Application Peer Review

Peter Choi presented an overview of the Continued Funding Application Decision Appeal Request from the Institute for Systems Biology (ISB) for the Breakthrough Research Grant and noted the AIBS review and ISB's response were included in the meeting materials. Peter summarized the board's recent action regarding this application, including the board vote at the August 14, 2024 board meeting to not approve continued funding for the final grant period 6 and to terminate the grant upon completion of period 5 (ending March 31, 2025). In accordance with CARE Fund's standard procedure, the comments from the review panel were provided to the project's principal investigator, Dr. James Heath.

Dr. Heath (ISB) requested an appeal of the decision. Specifically, ISB requested an opportunity to respond in writing to the review committee to address each of its findings, followed by a reconsideration by the CARE Board.

Thomas Brown disclosed his affiliate appointment with the Institute for Systems Biology.

Peter noted the CARE Board has not previously received an appeal request and a policy to address appeals is not in place. Multiyear Breakthrough Research Grant projects requiring a continued funding application are legacy grants from CARE Fund's Inaugural Plan implementation. Peter asked for the Committee's recommendation to the CARE Board regarding Institute for Systems Biology's appeal request to the continued funding decision.

A discussion followed.

After the discussion, Peter presented the following potential options for the Committee's recommendation to the CARE Board:

1. Recommend the CARE Board accept the appeal request and forward the ISB response to the original AIBS panel for review.
2. Recommend the Board not accept the appeal request and not forward the ISB response to AIBS for review.

MOTION: Beth Lawlor made a motion to recommend the CARE Board not accept the appeal request and not forward the ISB response to AIBS for review. Cliff Berkman seconded the motion. Thomas Brown recused from the vote. The motion was approved.

Laura Flores Cantrell noted CARE Fund staff will work with Beth Lawlor to create a recommendation to the CARE Board for the next regular meeting regarding the development of a policy related to appeals.

5. Committee Chair

The committee agreed by consensus to postpone to a future meeting the selection of the Standing Committee on Grants Chair.

6. Public Comment

No members of the public were present to provide comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes approved by the CARE Board of Directors at a regular meeting of the board on November 6, 2024.

Signed by:	
	11/21/2024
Marc Cummings, CARE Board Secretary	Date