



Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment Standing Committee on Grants Meeting Minutes April 22, 2025

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, and Libby Mongue-Wymore.

Committee Members Present and Constituting a Quorum: Cliff Berkman, Thomas Brown, Nancy Davidson, Beth Lawlor, and Libby Mongue-Wymore.

Committee Members Absent: None

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

Guests Present: None

Tuesday April 22, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (PT)

1. Welcome and Summary of Key Action Items

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Davidson, Committee Chair, at 1:00 p.m. Quorum was established and confirmed. Nancy presented the Summary of Key Action Items for the Committee.

2. Scientific Discoveries Research Review Panels Appointment

Nancy noted the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) has identified reviewer candidates for the two review panels for the Scientific Discoveries Research RFP: Panel 1: Immunotherapeutics and Panel 2: Etiology, Detection, and Treatment. The project summaries and the anonymized biosketches of the reviewer candidates are included in the meeting materials.

Before discussing the slate of reviewers on each panel, Nancy invited the committee members to disclose any affiliations, or actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Nancy disclosed affiliations with the University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center. Beth Lawlor disclosed affiliations with Seattle Children's Research Institute, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, and the University of Washington. Tom Brown disclosed affiliations with Sygnomics, Inc. and the Institute for Systems Biology.

A committee member asked how AIBS manages potential conflicts between reviewers and applicants. Peter Choi noted the AIBS does not recruit reviewers from the state of Washington. AIBS also checks for conflicts and requires reviewers to confirm there are no conflicts with applicant organization or Principal Investigators before applications are assigned for review.

Committee members noted the reviewer candidates in both panels had an impressive depth and breadth of expertise. A committee member asked about the expertise of the reviewers in the panels to evaluate applications focused on artificial intelligence (AI) and computational biology, and whether AIBS could ensure at least one reviewer with AI or computational biology expertise will be assigned to review those applications on each panel. Peter noted this feedback can be shared with AIBS before the panel reviews.

MOTION: Tom Brown made a motion to appoint the slate of reviewer candidates to the scientific review committee as provided by AIBS, with the request to AIBS that at least one reviewer with AI or computational biology expertise be assigned to review proposals with that research focus to review the applications submitted to the Scientific Discoveries Research RFP. The motion was seconded by Libby Mongue-Wymore. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Implementation and Outcomes Research (IOR) Cycle 2 RFP

Nancy introduced the next agenda item to review and discuss a draft of the Implementation and Outcomes Research Cycle 2 RFP. Pam Fujita-Yuhas provided a brief overview of the proposed changes from Cycle 1 of this opportunity to Cycle 2.

She noted this draft RFP has been updated to include language previously approved by the CARE Board in the Scientific Discoveries Research (SDR) Cycle 1 RFP, reflect learnings from the first cycle of IOR and SDR RFPs, and feedback from AIBS. Pam then turned the floor to Nancy to facilitate the committee discussion.

Nancy asked whether the Committee had any initial impressions before the discussion. Peter then presented a slide with the main questions for the discussion. Nancy asked the committee to discuss the first question, "Should CARE Fund implement application limits for companies separate from research institutions or other eligible grantee types?"

Pam then presented a slide on the portfolio of CARE Fund grants awarded from May 2023 to March 2025.

Nancy asked for the Committee's feedback on the question of company limits and a discussion followed.

Joseph Sparacio asked staff to share with the Committee the feedback from Assistant Attorney General Sandra Adix regarding the question of the CARE Board's authority related to setting application limits. Peter shared AAG Adix's feedback that setting application limits to facilitate basic fairness and the other aims of the program is reasonable. The CARE Fund statute does not specifically address the topic; however, along with broad general authority to support setting application limits based on specific criteria (RCW 43.348.030), the statute explicitly states: "The endowment is to oversee and guide the program, including the solicitation, selection, and award of grants." (RCW 34.348.040(1)) Because of the potential of a lot of variables within a single type of entity, limiting the number of grant applications based on specific criteria such as budget, number of researchers, number of employees, etc. is more fact specific and therefore preferable (to basing it on the broader criterion of entity type).

Pam shared a slide showing the CARE Fund grant amounts awarded and pending applications to the Scientific Discoveries Research (SDR) Cycle 1 RFP to illustrate the potential number of grants and potential amount of funding that could be awarded to applicant organizations that currently have active CARE Fund grants.

Several issues were noted by the Committee, including the desire to grow the cancer research ecosystem, fund the best science, and encourage public private partnerships. The Committee also noted differences between public sector and private sector organizations.

Nancy recommended the Committee proceed to the next discussion question as it would provide clarity on the question of application limits. Nancy asked, "Should CARE Fund limit PI's to only one active grant under the same funding mechanism (e.g., a PI with an active IOR Cycle 1 grant would not be eligible to apply to IOR Cycle 2)?"

Pam presented a slide showing the number of grants and amount awarded to Principal investigators who have or who could potentially have multiple active CARE Fund grants. Pam noted the IOR application limit speaks to two issues that have come up in discussion with AIBS. First, if an applicant has a current grant, should that PI be able to apply again for the same funding opportunity which could have an overlapping grant period with the current grant award? Second, if the Board elects to allow subsequent grant applications from a PI with a current award from that opportunity, should subsequent proposals demonstrate whether the proposal is a significant advancement from previously funded work if research is related?

Nancy asked the Committee for feedback on the topic of only one active grant in the same funding mechanism. A discussion followed. Staff clarified there are currently no limits on grantees having an active grant in multiple funding opportunities.

Peter added that a proposed criterion for reviews has been added to the draft RFP for reviewers to look at previous CARE Fund grants awarded to the applicant in the previous 37 months to evaluate whether an application is differentiated from previous applications or substantially advances the research rather than make minor incremental advances.

Nancy directed Committee members to the language in the Draft IOR Cycle 2 RFP that addresses instance in which the investigator/applicant organization has received CARE Fund grants in the 37 months prior to the application deadline directing reviewers to evaluate if the proposed project is distinct enough from previously funded project(s) to warrant further funding. Committee members agreed by consensus that an applicant should not be prevented from applying for a grant under the same funding opportunity if they have a current grant as long as aims do not overlap. A committee member inquired about the documentation of other support provided by applicants to assess overlap. Peter responded that information about other support will be requested in the IOR Cycle 2 application. Committee members asked how the determination of the distinction between proposals from the same applicant would be made and recommended AIBS address this in the review. Committee members agreed that if applications were determined to be distinct, applicants may apply to the same funding opportunity again if they have an active grant.

Nancy then asked Committee members to consider the question, "Should CARE Fund provide more definitive requirements on the location of the Principal Investigator?" Pam noted CARE Fund

received a number of questions in the Question and Answer periods for both IOR Cycle 1 and SDR Cycle 1 RFPs related to the requirement to have cancer research be conducted in Washington State.

A discussion followed. Committee members discussed various ways the majority language could be interpreted and whether a specific percentage rather than just a simple majority would accomplish the objective of supporting research in Washington, including the percentage of personnel in Washington set at 100% and a requirement that 75% of award amounts to be spent in state unless justification could be provided for an exception. Peter noted that AAG Adix would need to be consulted regarding how to apply limits to subawards versus other services out of state. There was general agreement in favor of requiring more funds be spent in state; however, it was agreed that further discussion was needed with the full Board at the next CARE Board meeting scheduled for May.

Nancy then turned the Committee discussion to the allowable cost policy and whether the draft RFP reflects the Board's intent with regard to allowable indirect costs? And how might the CARE Fund address changes to a grantee's indirect cost rate that occur during the grant period?

A discussion followed. The Committee generally agreed to recommend the Board adopt the proposed language in the draft RFP that "indirect costs are allowed at the current federally negotiated rate or the rate in place as of February 6, 2025, whichever is greater. If the applicant did not have a federally negotiated rate as of February 6, 2025, the indirect cost rate may not exceed 30%" as this was consistent with what the Board approved in the current policy and at the March 12, 2025 meeting.

Peter then requested the Committee address a final item with regard to how CARE Fund will treat a grantee's indirect cost rate change that occurs during the grant period. A discussion followed. By consensus, the Committee was in favor of proposing to the CARE Board that Fund CARE allow the indirect cost rate in place at the start of the award throughout the duration of the grant period.

MOTION: Tom Brown made a motion to bring the Committee's recommendations from this meeting to the Board. Beth Lawlor seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment

No members of the public were present to provide comment.

5. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:04 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 May 28, 2025.

Signed by: Marc Cummings 6/6/2025
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Marc Cummings, CARE Board Secretary Date