

Urban Health and Public Policy Research Cluster Meeting
January 15, 2008

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Attendance was taken. In attendance were Greer Glazer, Chair; Steve Crosby, Lisa Cosgrove, Laura Hayman, Donna Haig Friedman, Peter Kiang, Bill Kiernan, Robert Morris. Not in attendance were Joan Becker, Barbara Lewis, and David Terkla.
2. Faculty Co-chair. Dean Glazer asked if the committee thought there should be a faculty co-chair and if so, were there volunteers. The answer to both questions was in the negative.
3. Cluster Group Charge. As the committee saw it, the charge of the group is to “assess the UHPPR cluster area and recommend investments in the following four areas:
 - Faculty and staff recruitment
 - Research infrastructure enhancements
 - Academic program enrichment
 - Connecting activities for promoting research collaborations”

Dean Glazer noted there may be available monies from the VDC for investment in these areas.

4. Major topic of conversation. The committee spent most of the meeting discussing the best way to proceed with this charge.
 - It was recommended that the group review Appendix B: Urban Health Research and Public Policy, which was distributed. Important to understand areas of strength and perhaps look at gaps in those areas. Dean Glazer asked the group to comment at the next meeting on the adequacy of Appendix B. Dean Glazer also recommended that the committee review page 28 of the Battelle report. At our next meeting we will attempt to propose a research agenda in this topic area, strategies for getting to that research agenda, and perhaps assess barriers to that agenda.
 - There was discussion of a possibility of a new center to be established in the urban health area. Dean Glazer distributed a list of university centers for health disparities that John Ciccarelli had compiled. Dean Glazer asked the group to be prepared to comment on what kind of a center we might propose, and then in that context to read the article “The Urban Health Initiative” that she distributed.

5. Other comments and needs

- It was suggested that we review the content of the UPenn health disparities center.
- The possibility was suggested of focusing on an evaluation and/or cost control strategy of the Commonwealth's universal health care plan.
- We may ask Ciccarelli or others to comment on the policy ideas from other clusters.
- We may want to propose an "agile infrastructure" to pursue this agenda.
- There was a brief discussion, which will probably continue, about whether to look at new research niches, rather than merely building on existing strengths. There was a consensus that the committee should push the limits of what is encompassed in the Battelle proposed research agenda. Ideas discussed were the broader wellness issues, as they are impacted by race, ethnicity and age; translational research in this entire area; conflict of interest policies; and veterans health.
- The question was raised about how the group can actually live the research agenda, by actual activities in our own university environment.
- There was a discussion about how to engage others in the UMB community in this conversation.

6. Next meeting. Meeting scheduled for February 5, 4-5 PM. Richard Antonak and staff will be invited, to provide clarification on the mission and implementation possibilities for the group

Steve Crosby
1/24/08