



**American Brain Foundation
Research Advisory Committee Meeting
June 19, 2017**

**11:00 a.m. ET/ 10:00 a.m. CT/ 9:00 a.m. MT/ 8:00 a.m. PT
Conference Call**

In attendance: Carsten Bonnemann, MD; Merit Cudkowicz, MD; Robert Griggs, MD; Ralph Sacco, MD; Ira Shoulson, MD; Eugene Scharf, MD

Staff: Jane Ransom, Shelly Rucks, Suzi Sherman, Natalie Baumgartner

Excused: Shafali Jeste, MD; John Morris, MD; Raymond Roos, MD; Natalia Rost, MD; Christy Phelps, Deputy ED AAN.

Dr. Griggs welcomed everyone and discussed the agenda for the meeting. Dr. Griggs asked that the Research Advisory Committee minutes from April 25, 2017, be reviewed.

MOTION to approve the minutes from April 25, 2017.

Approved (Unanimous).

1. **Crowdfunding:** The Research Advisory Committee had a hard time with the formatting of the research proposals they were to review in the spreadsheet. Staff will reformat proposals into separate files for each project with table of content for each. In the future, the committee would like us to request bio sketches of researchers, instead of CVs. Dr. Griggs asked if it would be possible to simply go to a website and view all the applications without them being included in the meeting materials. Ms. Ransom stated that the Foundation team would inquire, but that the price might be too high to add 10 additional users.
 - a) **Projects posted to date/ Pending projects:** Ms. Ransom explained that there have been eight projects posted on the crowdfunding site with ten additional applicants moving through the pipeline. There is no time limit imposed on applicants for submitting their full applications, so each project moves through the process at its own rate.
 - b) **Marketing plan:** Ms. Ransom stated that the Foundation team had not started marketing the projects in earnest and would as soon as we had established a marketing plan, but that the current projects would not be penalized. We will turn the 90-day clock back to zero when their time expires. The Foundation is currently looking at restructuring marketing resources and does not want this to have a negative impact on the researchers.

Dr. Griggs asked what the next steps for the 10 applicants would be. Ms. Ransom stated that once their final applications are approved, science writers would take their projects and make the writing more approachable. The written piece would then be sent back to the researchers for approval. This process takes about a week.

The Committee wanted to understand why it looked like in the applications LOIs were not voted on, and Ms. Ransom stated that LOIs were advanced based on majority rule.

Ms. Ransom mentioned meeting with the Diabetes Research Connection to discuss some of their crowdfunding experiences, and she stated that they received a few interesting take-aways. The first being that researchers need to be willing to raise at least 10% of their goal amongst their personal and professional networks. The second is that the Foundation needs to establish a “posse” of 50–100 tech-savvy supporters, who volunteer to re-share crowdfunding projects on social media to boost exposure.

The Committee agreed with the Diabetes Research Connection, and felt that it would be great to involve younger neurologists as social media thought leaders. They also liked the idea of researchers promoting themselves.

Dr. Griggs felt that many people want to be involved in AAN opportunities, and that it could become an opportunity for emerging leaders to get involved. Ms. Rucks stated that the Foundation is working with the AAN Membership Committee to see how the Foundation can best spread the crowdfunding message further amongst younger neurologists

- c) **Crowdfunding with organizational partners:** Ms. Ransom explained the Foundation is now ready to send a letter to partner organizations to invite them to participate on the crowdfunding site.

The Committee felt that this was a great way to build and foster relationships. They also mentioned that the Alzheimer’s Association, Biotech companies, Pharma, and medical device companies might be interested in the crowdfunding site.

Ms. Ransom stated that the Foundation is currently constrained from directly partnering with pharma and medical device companies through an agreement with the AAN. However, there is nothing restricting us from writing them about the crowdfunding site.

The Committee felt that a distinction could be made that these companies would not be directly donating to the Foundation but to crowdfunding projects. They felt that if projects could be centralized and consolidated for private enterprise to have an incubator, every D.C. fund will be looking to pick their ‘winners’.

2. **Major Giving:** Ms. Rucks stated that she is talking to individuals about major gifts directed toward the crowdfunding site. Donors can give larger gifts and donate the full amount to one of the research projects, which would encourage greater interest which could lead to increased investments.

The Committee discussed how the donors could contact the researcher. Ms. Rucks explained that this interest has not been expressed directly. There has been a sense of anonymity between the researcher and donor, but moving forward, the need to facilitate conversations between donor and researcher will increase. Ms. Rucks stated that

cocktail receptions for donors and researchers to come together could be done regionally, and would give donors a chance to talk to a researcher, though not necessarily the researcher that they donated to on the crowdfunding site.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. (Central).