



**American Brain Foundation  
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting  
January 8, 2018**

**9:45 a.m. EST/8:45 a.m. CST/7:45 a.m. MST/6:45 a.m. PST  
By Telephone Conference Call**

**In attendance: Lisa Shulman, MD; Jeffrey Rosenfeld, MD; Martin Shenkman, CPA;  
A. Gordon Smith, MD; Ben Utecht**

**Guest: Tasha Ostendorf**

**Staff: Jane Ransom, Shelly Collins Rucks, Natalie Baumgartner**

**Excused: Kevin Goodno**

- 1) Welcome and introduction of attendees: Dr. Shulman welcomed everyone and discussed the agenda and objectives for the meeting.
- 2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 9, 2017: Dr. Shulman requested committee approval for the previous Strategic Planning Committee's meeting. Approval was unanimous.
- 3) Updated Scorecard: The Scorecard has been updated to include red, yellow, or green color blocks to highlight goals that are just under the threshold (yellow), goals that are quite a bit under the threshold (red), or goals that are at or above the threshold (green).
  - a) **Strategic Goal #1:** The number of peer reviewed research projects on the crowdfunding site is just under the threshold, with the remaining goals in this section being benchmarked. The Committee acknowledged that the crowdfunding site has had a soft roll-out, and the goal was an educated guess. In hindsight, perhaps the goal for posted projects should have been a benchmarking goal. In addition to the projects posted on the website, we have 11 LOIs and one approved project in the pipeline.

The Committee discussed strategies for building momentum on the crowdfunding platform, including the posting of CRTS and CSDA grants showing partner contributions as "already funded." This will happen after the awards are announced in late January.

The Committee also wondered about balance. Should we be doing bigger campaigns with fewer projects on the site, or vice versa. In addition, there was discussion about a crowdfunding campaign in MS for the Weizmann Institute in March.

- b) **Strategic Goal #2:** The stakeholder awareness through site traffic is showing good numbers that have exceeded our goals for this year and beyond. The threshold and maximum were based on last year's website numbers.

We are seeing some progress on the issue of “conversion,” which refers to a website visitor converting into a donor by making an online donation. Our rate conversion rate increased from 0.65% to 0.75% in the last quarter. The average conversion rate for a nonprofit is 1.1%.

- c) **Strategic Goal #3:** The Foundation is ahead in raising funds for the research agenda, having succeeded its maximum goal for the year. There has been a substantial increase in operating funds raised over the last quarter, however, overall, we are still behind in this area.

The number and amount of major donor requests is in maximum territory, and the number of new donors is slightly under threshold, though this number may change when our final numbers for December are tallied. The number of AAN donors has improved, but is still significantly under the threshold goal, but the number of public donors acquired is ahead of the threshold goal.

- d) **Strategic Goal #4:** The number of AAN staff donating to the Foundation is at 51%, slightly above threshold. The Foundation has also met its threshold goal for funding AAN research.

Dr. Shulman offered that the Scorecard is going well, especially when considering that targets were not set with full knowledge of what might be reasonable. It is a good start for the Foundation.

Ms. Ransom stated that the biggest takeaway from this year’s Scorecard is the contradiction between the Unrestricted and Operating funds. The Foundation will be presenting a sustaining donor model program to the Board in Orlando, which is a strategy for improving operating revenue.

The Committee wanted to understand if there would be more discussion at the Board meeting of the idea of directing honoraria toward operating costs. AAN donors will understand the need for operational support more than most. The AAN will need to be brought into that discussion because there are currently opportunities to restrict donations to specific AAN programs on the form.

- 4) Measuring member and public awareness of the Foundation and our mission: Tasha Ostendorf, a trained neuroscientist and statistician for the AAN, introduced herself and discussed two surveys underway to measure awareness of the Foundation and our cause.

- a) **Member Survey:** A survey was sent in December to 1000 members. The response rate has been low, with 43 have responses. The reasons include that members are more likely to respond to surveys that related directly to their day-to-day practice; and it wasn’t possible to conduct this survey as a pop-up on the AAN website due to the new website roll-out.

The Committee discussed alternatives to the current survey distribution, such as having members complete the survey during dues check-off. Ms. Ostendorf mentioned that this

is when AAN leadership normally has their survey to gain information for their Board Scorecard. They get a good response rate from this method. Ms. Ransom suggested that the Foundation might tack on a few questions. Other tactics discussed were offering an incentive, such as tickets to the Foundation's gala, use of the annual meeting app, or paper surveys at the annual meeting.

- b) **Public Survey:** The survey vendor that the Foundation is using is very like SurveyMonkey, but more sophisticated. It can be branded, and allows the Foundation to purchase respondents from the public. The questions used can be found in the meeting materials.

The Foundation has received 500 responses already, and the panel has been live for only one week. There is a previous survey created by a different vendor, but it will be possible to benchmark data alongside their findings.

The Committee wanted to understand why the Foundation included questions about disease versus illness. Ms. Ransom explained that this was a question that was raised by the fundraising staff, who find that public donors sometimes related to different wordings.

The Committee also found the language in question five confusing and might not allow the widest number of respondents to relate brain diseases with a broader description. They suggested that we avoid abbreviations, but include them with long-form diseases or illnesses.

- 5) 2018 Board ScoreCard: The Foundation discussed the next steps for the 2018 Board Scorecard. The Compensation Committee has already selected incentive goals for 2018. These will be dropped into a draft 2018 Scorecard. For the remaining goals, she will suggest goals and provide a rationale. The Committee will finalize the scorecard at its February meeting.

**Adjourn 9:45 am C.T.**