



**American Brain Foundation  
Research Advisory Committee Meeting  
September 27, 2019**

**2:00 p.m. ET/ 1:00 p.m. CT/ 12:00 p.m. MT/ 11:00 a.m. PT  
Conference Call**

**Meeting Minutes**

**In attendance:** Robert C. Griggs, MD, FAAN, Chair; Raymond Roos, MD, FAAN, Vice Chair; Mark F. Mehler, MD, FAAN; Eugene L. Scharf, MD

**Staff:** Jane Ransom, Lisa Deutsch

**Excused:** Carsten Bonnemann, MD; Jose E. Cavazos, MD, PhD, FAAN; Merit Cudkowicz, MD, MSC; James C. Grotta, MD, FAAN; John Morris, MD, FAAN; Ralph Sacco, MD, MS, FAAN, FAHA; Ira Shoulson, MD, FAAN; Phyllis C. Zee, MD, PhD; Christy Phelps

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Griggs at 1:05 p.m. CT. The meeting minutes of August 2, 2019 were not approved, due to the lack of a quorum.

**1. Autism Summer Stipends**

**Jane Ransom on behalf of Shafali Jeste, MD**

Ms. Ransom reported that we have raised about \$60K over the last 2 years for autism research, which is not enough for a full research training scholarship. Dr. Jeste suggested providing summer stipends of \$3K for medical students to work in autism labs. Our proposal is based closely on the AAN's summer stipend program. The plan would be to fund three stipends per year and continue to fundraise.

Discussion items included:

- Would we consider an applicant with a lot of research experience, but not specifically in autism? Yes, the committee agreed, there's no reason to exclude any students.
- There was a question about the requirement that the student be an AAN member. This should not be an impediment if we make clear that AAN membership is free to students.
- The committee felt that it should be a requirement (not an option) for the applicant and their mentor to submit CVs.
- Applicant should also have letters from both their mentor and their supervisor.
- The committee would like to omit the requirement that there must be a SIGN chapter on an applicant's campus in order for them to apply.
- Funding could take place over any season, not necessarily summer.
- Would we consider funding both students and residents? Ms. Ransom will discuss that requirement with the Academy.

Ms. Ransom will make the suggested modifications and send to Dr. Griggs for review.

## **2. Crowdfunding 2.0**

**Eugene Scharf, MD**

The ABF has been piloting crowdfunding since 2017. Since then, we have learned that the majority of our campaigns to date have had high budgets of up to \$100,000, but come up short. Most crowdfunding campaigns on the most popular platforms have an average goal of \$7,000. Our campaigns have a higher than average ask, and we run them far longer than the norm. ABF will reduce the asks and make the goals more practical and tangible. Campaigns will be shorter to build momentum.

Several examples of crowdfunding items with lower budgets were suggested, such as money to:

- buy a particular piece of equipment
- pay for the services of a statistical consultant
- fund lab assistants

The suggestion to pay for travel expenses to attend a conference was discarded, as that is very rarely an issue.

## **3. 2020 Commitment to Cures Breakthrough Award**

**Robert Griggs, MD**

At last month's Board meeting, Dr. Grotta suggested we give this year's breakthrough award to a team of Canadian stroke researchers, since our meeting is being held in Toronto.

The Committee agreed to give a shared award to the stroke research team of Drs. Michael Hill, Andrew Demchuk, and Mayank Goyal.

Committee members suggested several ways to increase visibility for this team, perhaps having them do a podcast or a short video, or feature them in a journal or magazine.

## **4. AAN/ABF Partnership, 2020-2024**

**Ralph Sacco, MD**

Ms. Ransom summarized the discussion from last month's AAN board meeting in Mr. Sacco's absence.

Four and a-half years ago, the AAN made a five-year commitment to pay a substantial portion of the ABF's operating costs to help foundation move in a new, public-facing direction. In September, ABF's Board leadership team presented a new five-year business plan to the AAN board asking them for a further five years of support. The ABF showed that the funding flows between the ABF and AAN have been reversed and that the return on the AAN investment in ABF is 450 percent. However, the ABF has a continued need for operational funding in order to support aggressive fundraising for the AAN's research program. The AAN Board voted to continue funding in the amount of \$6M over the next five years. The ABF has pledged to raise \$19M for the Academy's research program, and as much or more in unrestricted dollars to be used for other research. The team is very excited about our continued partnership. The AAN Board has requested a more strategic relationship with us in terms of research going forward, which will lead to some changes to the focus on this committee. We are optimistic that we will be able to charge indirects of 10% on future money we receive.

The committee offered their congratulations on the good news.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:40pm**

DRAFT