AMERICAN BRAIN FOUNDATION

American Brain Foundation
Research Advisory Committee Meeting
August 6, 2021
3:00 p.m. ET / 2:00 p.m. CT / 1:00 p.m. MT / 12:00 p.m. PT
Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Robert Griggs, MD, Chair; Raymond Roos, MD, Vice Chair; Jose Biller, MD; Jose E. Cavazos, MD; Jacqueline French, MD; Na Tosha N. Gatson, MD, PhD; Walter Koroshetz, MD; Mark Mehler, MD; Ralph Sacco, MD; David Dodick, MD

Staff: Jane Ransom; Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD; Emily Christian

Excused: Carsten Bonnemann, MD; Merit Cudkowicz, MD; James Grotta, MD; Bruce Ovbiagele, MD; Ron Petersen, MD, PhD; Eugene Scharf, MD; Ira Shoulson, MD; Gordon Smith, MD; Reisa Sperling, MD; Phyllis C. Zee, MD, PhD; Mary Post, MBA, CAE; Christy Phelps; Natalia Rost, MD

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Robert Griggs at 2:01 p.m. CT. The meeting minutes of June 4, 2021 were approved.

1. **Research Program Updates:** Julia Miglets-Nelson, PhD provided an update on the ABF's research program. The research program has been restructured into two broad categories – Next Generation Research Grants and Cure One, Cure Many Initiatives – to give better clarity to donors and applicants. The Next Generation Research Grants are the ABF's flagship program and provide two- and three-year fellowship funding to early career clinician scientists in a variety of disease areas. In 2022, the ABF plans to offer 18 such awards. Applications for the 2022 awards close on October 1, 2021. The Cure One, Cure Many Initiatives include large-scale special initiatives like the LBD Biomarker project, and the neuroinflammation initiative that is under development by the Special Initiatives Subcommittee. Pre-applications for the LBD Biomarker project closed on July 30, 2021, and the ABF received 21 pre-applications. The selection committee will meet on August 26 to review the pre-applications and invite full proposals, which will be due on October 29. The recipient will be selected in December, and announced in January 2022.

2. **2022 Scientific Breakthrough Award:** Dr. Raymond Roos presented the nominees for the 2022 Scientific Breakthrough Award. The ABF solicited nominations from the ABF Board and RAC, and the AAN Science Committee. The nominees were Stephen Hauser, MD; Leigh Hochberg, MD, PhD; Vanda Lennon, MD, PhD; Sabrina Paganoni, MD, PhD; and Rudolph Tanzi, PhD. The selection committee chose Dr. Stephen Hauser as the recipient of the 2022 award. Dr. Hauser will be featured at the ABF's Commitment to Cures gala at the 2022 AAN Annual meeting.

   For the 2023 award and beyond, the ABF will solicit nominations from its partner organizations, and hopes to send the nomination survey to the entire AAN membership. Nominees from the past three years will also be considered.

3. **Subcommittee Breakouts:** The Health Disparities, Next Generation Research Grants, and Special Initiatives subcommittees met in Zoom breakout rooms. A summary of each subcommittee's discussion follows below.

    Health Disparities Subcommittee: The Health Disparities Subcommittee reviewed and discussed the RFA for the 2022 Clinical Research Training Scholarship in Neurological Healthcare disparities. The subcommittee also discussed how the ABF might frame a new Clinical Research Training Scholarship reserved for a researcher who is from a group underrepresented in the field of neurology, and how the ABF might find funding for both awards.

    Next Generation Subcommittee: The Next Generation Subcommittee reviewed the scope of its charge relative to the role of the AAN's Science Committee in setting the criteria for the research scholarships, and turned its focus to the gaps between the number and disease areas of awards offered, and the number of applicants. The subcommittee noted that many worthy applications do not receive funding, which can be disheartening to promising applicants, and suggested that applicants who are not awarded funding should be alerted that their work is fundable, but that the ABF does not have enough funding to offer.

    Special Initiatives Subcommittee: The Special Initiatives Subcommittee discussed the scope of neuroinflammation within the proposed new special initiatives. From a donor perspective, it is likely advantageous to include many diseases. It is also important to emphasize understanding of the mechanisms of neuroinflammation, because the process itself is not inherently good or bad. The subcommittee also began a discussion about the amount needed to fund such an initiative.

Adjourned 3:00 p.m. CT.