CSACS MEETING MINUTES, 9/13/12

Present (Savannah): Himangshu Bose, Marie Dent, Wayne Glasgow, Jeff Ignatoff, James Knapp, Robert Visalli, Eric Shaw; (Macon): Jennifer Barkin, Amanda Chase, Randy Devereaux, Rob McKallip, David Parish, Betsy Smith, Mike Smith,

I. Randy Devereaux and Rob McKallip updated the group on the activities of the Research Committee
   ● Drafting a white paper requested by the Dean which will outline faculty needs and address collaborative research
   ● Identifying current needs (including software)
   ● Searching for new ideas to build research; discussion of roadblocks and strategies

II. Discussion issue: how we build collaboration between Savannah and Macon and across departments within each campus?
   ● To increase collaboration, need to have a defined purpose/goal (e.g., to publish, to get grant funding)
   ● Collaboration needs to be based on mutual interest
   ● Faculty need to be more aware of what others are doing regarding their research
     ○ In the past, basic science faculty have traveled to the other campus and shared research through networking and presentations of research.
     ○ MUSM website is currently not accurate/up to date; Need to make better use of the website for this purpose;
       ▪ Idea: have individualized faculty websites on the Mercer website which include bios, research interests, publications, etc.
   ● Idea from Robert Visalli’s experience at Purdue: Purdue sponsored a university-based grant ‘contest’ – funded 4 out of 40 projects; spurred people to collaborate to write their grant proposals.
     ○ Mercer University does offer a seed grant program which provides some money currently
       ▪ Idea: Is there a possibility for increasing the funding amount for projects that are ‘collaborative’
     ○ Medical Center of Central Georgia through MedCen does offer financial incentives for collaborative projects; the project must be sponsored by a clinical department.
     ○ In Savannah, a similar program through Memorial supports clinical research.
   ● It was noted that Savannah enjoys the benefits of the doctor’s lounge that fosters communication and relationship-building; Macon does not have something akin to this
     ○ Idea: create some opportunities to foster cross-department/cross-campus communication
   ● Idea: have Summer Scholars all on one day to minimize the problem of having only those faculty who were involved with particular projects going on a particular day; downside of this is that faculty may not be interested in spending extensive time hearing about research
that is completely outside of one’s field of expertise. On the other hand, this does show support for students involved in research and would provide opportunities for interaction.

- Increase opportunities for translational research (growing funding opportunities for this); need to enhance collaboration with clinicians
- Increase opportunities for community-based research; improve possibilities to get community members to ask the questions for the research
- Do we want to build collaboration within the institution (across departments) vs across institutions/campuses? Issue is not to favor one over the other; improving both can be positive and necessary

III. Current context for medical school faculty seeking funding/collaborating: securing 1/12 of salary from grants within three years.

- General agreement that we are not striving to move toward a model where faculty must secure significant salary support
- Grant funding has changed greatly; with increased competition, even senior investigators are struggling and schools are moving away from those kinds of models

Wrap up/Next steps:
Idea for using CSACS: have somebody bring grant idea (e.g., Aims page) to this group for discussion and feedback; group could assist with thinking through design issues, measurement, where to submit, etc.