Meeting Notes 10.11.12

Present in Macon: Rick McCann (Basic Sciences), Rob McKallip (Basic Sciences), Jim Thomas (Basic Sciences), Amanda Chase (Basic Sciences), Mike Smith (Community Med), David Parish (Community Med), Suzie Lamarca (Community Med)

Present in Savannah: Marie Dent (Community Medicine and Faculty Affairs), Robert Visalli (Biomedical Sciences), Peter Britt (Radiology), Eric Shaw (Community Medicine)

Rob McKallip gave a presentation on the Recommendations of the MUSM Research Committee (presentation posted on the C-SACS website).

Some of the key points noted/discussed in the meeting as it related to the presentation:

- The Research Committee identified key areas of development and recommendations. Key critical factors to fostering collaboration include enhancing support, providing incentives, and overcoming institutional roadblocks.

- Enhancing support includes having leadership support and involvement, having access to University resources, and building a true research infrastructure. Rob McKallip noted that support has to come from the top down in terms of leadership support, in order to be successful.

- It was noted that there have been pushes in the past from leadership to make research a priority, but there was little follow-through. It will be a challenge to get past this historical view, especially from the senior faculty, in order to be successful.

- Jim Thomas noted that there was a specific place on the former MUSM website that housed a detailed list of all the MUSM facilities, labs, equipment, and resources for everyone to access. This list has somehow been buried or taken off on the new MUSM website.

- It was noted that while the Grants & Contracts office of Mercer University is helpful for the financial side of the grants process, there is no true assistance in regards to funding identification, grants preparation, and NIH specific knowledge, except through Memorial University Medical Center. It was also noted that there is a high turnover rate in the Mercer University Grants & Contracts office, and the communication flow between this office and the research faculty is lacking. Most researchers at MUSM are not even aware of the Cayuse software system, which is now needed in order to submit an NIH grant at this University.

- Currently, there is a lack of incentive for faculty to initiate collaborative research projects.
David Parish pointed out that there is the AIM Grant Program here at MUSM, and that it is a successful collaborative research program. It may be that people are unaware of the grant program. The website for the AIM program can be found here: http://provost.mercer.edu/resources/aim/aim.cfm

It was acknowledged that there is a lack of mentorship between senior and junior faculty members at MUSM. It was noted that many of the senior faculty have too many administrative responsibilities in addition to teaching, which leaves little time left over for research, much less mentoring or collaborating. Many of the junior faculty members end up leaving after being at Mercer for only a short time period.

A Savannah participant suggested that we have true mentorship programs in place, where junior faculty would have to compete for mentorships that carry additional funding. This way, you would have mentorships that are fostered by senior faculty, and sought after by the junior faculty. Everyone agreed this is a great idea, and would need buy-in at the leadership level for funding these spots.

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 8, in the Education Conference Rooms on both the Macon and Savannah campuses.