

Boston University Medical Campus

Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories (NEIDL)

MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

6:00 pm. * Evans Bldg Room 112A

ATTENDING

Robert Francis, Chairperson, CLC; Richard Fox, CLC; Laura Badia, CLC; Kenneth Nwosu, CLC; Jon Santiago, CLC; Carol Tienken, CLC; Jean Lee, CLC; JK Fisher, CLC; Youngjin Jung, CLC; Robert Timmerman, CLC; David Opp, CLC; Valeda Britton, Executive Director, Community Relations/MED, BU; Chimel Idiokitas, Director, Community Outreach/MED, BU; Jake Sullivan, Asst. VP, Govt. & Comm. Affairs, BU; Dr. Ronald Corley, BU Department of Microbiology, Director, NEIDL

Chairperson Francis opened the meeting

Presentations

Where Collaborations, Research and Resources Meet to Develop Diagnostics, Vaccines and Treatments by Dr. Ron Corley:

Dr. Corley discussed how this facility was leveraging BU's resources and personnel to promote NEIDL research and identify unmet emerging infectious disease needs. He explained that we were actively recruiting faculty and how competitive it was to recruit faculty. From beginning to hire can take upwards of 18 months. He mentioned that we are able to support some investigators as they develop innovative initiatives that fit the NEIDL mission. Normally, they would be provided a start up package by the University and then expected to pursue other funding avenues to support their research. Grant writing can take a lot of time. It can take between 4-6 weeks to complete the application for a grant from an external resource.

Dr. Corley noted that the NEIDL is developing further expertise on the Zika virus. It has established a Zika virus lab and this has led to more research collaborations among scientists with diverse backgrounds and disciplines from across the university. Dr. Tarik Haydar, is a new NEIDL Faculty member and an Associate Professor in the Anatomy and Neurobiology Department. He is studying mammalian brain development and recently, obtained a grant with Dr. John Connor to do research on the impact of Zika on fetal brain development and cognitive capabilities.

Biology faculty member and NEIDL investigator Horacio Frydman is studying how the Zika virus infects and lives in mosquito cells. Dr. Frydman's expertise is with parasitic bacteria called Wolbachia, which infects mosquitos. He would like to use Wolbachia as a tool to discover what

genes could suppress the Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya viruses in mosquitos. The NEIDL has provided funding for a graduate student in Dr. Frydman's lab to conduct this research using mosquito cell lines. Further, we paid for her to train in a Florida lab to develop the necessary expertise and bring it back to share with the NEIDL and BU.

The NEIDL funded a project between Dr. Elke Muhlberger and Dr. Gustavo Mostoslavsky from the Center for Regenerative Medicine to develop pluripotent stem cells to study virus host interactions. This is important because animals' cells can be used instead of the animal itself. This collaboration resulted in a graduate student being hired as a research assistant during the summer. A grant was also awarded for this research.

Administrative:

No minutes were recorded for the October CLC meeting

Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) Report:

There was no IBC report this month

CLC DISCUSSION OF MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL/OPERATING GUIDELINES

The CLC members reviewed the CLC's Mission and Current Organizational/Operational Guidelines and made suggestions including that CLC meetings be quarterly and that the public be invited to an annual meeting instead of quarterly meetings. Revisions will be distributed at the next meeting. Members were asked to consider sitting on NEIDL CLC subcommittees as an opportunity to become more actively engaged and knowledgeable about NEIDL activities and research as well as to contribute their skills and expertise.

Government & Community Affairs Update:

Mr. Sullivan announced that the City Council has three (3) council meetings left. Any action on matters related to BSL-3 and BSL-4 will need to occur before the end of the year.

Mr. Sullivan also gave a brief update on the University's partnership with the City, and Project Place to improve the neighborhood around Mass/Cass Boulevard through beautification (public art and planters), employment and enhanced public safety efforts. As a result of this partnership, Project Place is able to place its employees in this area to pick up litter and discarded syringes and act as a friendly face/ambassador for people in the neighborhood. Also, BU is a member of the South End Forum's Working Group on Addiction, Recovery and Homelessness.

Ms. Britton and Mr. Idiokitas shared a few highlights of their community relation activities and donations. BU athletes will be participating in Holiday Reading at local elementary schools throughout the City. ID2 (infectious disease/public health educational enrichment program) will be at the Lilla Frederick School in Dorchester. Fifteen 7th graders and an equal amount of NEIDL researchers and post-docs will be conducting a hands-on, participatory class. This class is focused on infectious disease and answers a variety of different questions. What do infectious diseases look like? How are they identified? What are their components? How are they transmitted? Why do we need safe containment facilities to research emerging infectious diseases?

Mr. Idiokitas invited the committee to the NEIDL's annual Holiday Party. He also encouraged the committee to contact him if there is any interest in attending BU Athletic games.

Next CLC Meeting: February 28, 2017