

Breast Cancer Research Council Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2025 ~ 1111 Franklin St. Oakland ~ Broadway Conference Center

Members Present In Person: Bryan Goldner, Lori Petitti, Angeliqne Richardson, Svasti Haricharan (Zoom), Maura Dickler (Zoom), Wendy Verret, Susana Ramirez, Sherice Torres, Argelia Flores, Hisashi, Tanaka, Svetlana Popova, Lesley Taylor, Barbara Perry

Members Absent: Christopher Clinton Conway, Wendy Shurelds, Erika Bell

Staff: Sharima Rasanayagam, Katherine McKenzie, Lisa Minniefield, Kathleen Erwin

Guest: Kimberly Berger (Trainee Supplement Presenter)

Call to Order: Bryan called the council to order at 10:30 am and initiated introductions of all Council members and asked the ice breaker question.

- I. **Renewal of Confidentiality/Conflict of Interest Agreement:** Mhel gave an overview of the RGPO Confidentiality/COI Agreement highlighting the most pertinent information. Any questions on COI, please contact Mhel as these are complicated issues. The members were asked to read, sign, and scan their forms and send them to Lisa. All members need to renew the agreement annually.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** The council reviewed the minutes from the June council meeting.

MOTION: Argelia moved (Lori seconded) to approve the June meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **RGPO Executive Director's Report:** Kathleen updated the council with the ongoing challenges UC faces, including federal and state research funding, hiring freezes, and all-around financial uncertainty. She noted CBCRP is not directly affected by the federal or UC budget issues, but it does affect researchers supported by the program. She announced that UC launched a "Stand Up for UC" campaign to encourage public support for higher education, research, and community engagement amid national scrutiny of universities. She encouraged the group to go to the site and share information, contact legislators, and advocate for values such as health equity and scientific integrity. The link to the website was shared with the council.
- IV. **Director's Report:** Sharima reported on the Governor's proposed budget that shows a vastly large budget amount but is only expected to receive half of the proposed \$12 million. She also reported on the Tax Check-off contributions and the Legislative Report that will be submitted in December and is due to legislature every five years. She announced the newly established *Barbara Brenner Memorial Award* that will support trainee supplements for

researchers new to breast cancer research. She clarified to the group about council advocacy and lobbying noting that the Council, as an advisory body to the University of California, may engage in advocacy or lobbying activities independently, provided UC staff are not present during such discussions. Council members Leslie and Svasti drafted and circulated a letter to policymakers regarding funding equity; this was done appropriately and outside UC meetings.

- V. Policy Recommendations: Pesticides Regulation Funding Approval:** The Council reviewed policy recommendations for the annual Policy Research Award on pesticide regulation related to breast cancer risk. Sharima overviewed the focus and goal of the call and presented the two proposals. The PRAG vote was split 50/50, reflecting the strength of both submissions. The council discussed the scoring for the applications and selected one of the proposals for funding.

MOTION: Lori moved (Barbara seconded) to approve the PRAG's recommendation to fund one of the two proposals. The motion passed unanimously.

- VI. Mission Statement:** Sharima presented the program's current mission statement and a suggested revised version to the council. The mission statement aims to be concise, hopeful, and inclusive of CBCRP's legislative mandate, core focus on research, and broad impact on breast cancer prevention and care in California. The group's discussion included adding the word "prevention" as it's part of the legislation. They also discussed the scope of the statement and language considerations. Council members were asked to review the proposed edits and submit comments via email. A further discussion and final vote scheduled for the December 5th meeting.

During lunch, Hisashi Tanaka did his Meet-a-Member Presentation.

- VII. Grantee Presentation:** Kimberly Berger from Sequoia Foundation, works on environmental health, youth engagement, community health education, and environmental epidemiology research. Her presentation, *The pregnancy exposome and risk for premenopausal breast cancer (PMBC) across race/ethnicities*, focused on discovering environmental causes of premenopausal breast cancer using a novel untargeted exosomes approach. She presented a data analysis, the design and population of the research, and key findings.
- VIII. Cycle 31 Funding Report:** Katie presented an overview of Cycle 31 funding decisions, covering both core funding and program initiatives. A total of 18 grants were awarded, totaling approximately \$10 million. She summarized the distributions for funding, priorities, institutions, trends, and success rates. She noted that since 2021, 39 trainee supplements

totaling over \$384K have been funded. Slides from the presentation will be distributed after the meeting.

- IX. Cycle 32 Planning:** Katie presented an overview of the LOI review including the multiple award types offered this cycle and the review process. She presented the timeline, review criteria, scoring the LOIs and how COI's are managed. She reminded the group of the importance of managing unconscious biases and confidentiality. The reviews will need to be completed by the December meeting when the Council will decide which LOIs to move forward to full applications. Katie also provided an update on Bridge funding which is designed to support postdoctoral fellows or graduate students in California whose federally funded breast cancer research was prematurely terminated in 2024. Awards provide up to 12 months of support at \$25,000. Funds may be used for tuition, completing studies, or travel for next-step opportunities. Members volunteered to serve on the review committee if applications are submitted. She noted deadlines for submitting Conference Awards and other funding applications.
- X. Program Initiatives Presentation:** Sharima presented an overview and planning for the next round of Program-Directed Initiatives (PI4). She provided background on previous rounds of Program-Directed Initiatives, highlighted existing research gaps, especially in prevention and risk reduction, and shared initial ideas from the Evaluation Committee. She gave a summary of the history of the initiative and the planning processes used. The staff want to adjust the PI4 planning approach. She presented data on portfolio trends across the first three initiatives, the funding timeline, and the Council's role and decision-making tasks they will make by the end of the retreat. The group discussed potential initiative topics that included disparities and prevention concepts and made suggestions for future presentations at the retreat.
- XI. Committee Reports & 2025-26 Preview:** Staff and committee chairs provided updates on active committees and encouraged Council members to volunteer for at least one committee. Sharima reported on the Policy committee noting the commitment of serving on the committee, the approved topics and current projects. Katie presented the efforts the Outreach committee, highlighting that the program wants to expand their advocate database by recruiting more diverse California-based advocates, especially from underrepresented regions such as the Central Valley and San Diego. She presented the barriers of obtaining advocates and some proposed solutions. Sharima reported on the responsibilities of the Evaluation and Priority-Setting committee and welcomes new members to join. Katie summarized the purpose of the Finance committee and that they meet on an annual basis and are seeking new committee members.
- XII. Announcements:** A friendly reminder that October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Members are encouraged to remind family, friends, and communities to schedule breast cancer screenings if they haven't already.

XIII. Adjourn: Bryan adjourned meeting at 4:26 pm.