BERD Executive Committee Meetings

March 7, 2017

Present
Nichole Carlson (Director), Jane Gralla (Children’s Hospital), Doug Everett (National Jewish), Becki Bucher-Bartelson (Denver Health), Matt McQueen (CU Boulder), Sangeeta Rao (Colorado State), Stan Xu (Kaiser), Miranda Kroehl (Colorado Biostatistics Consortium), John Neal (Program Manager).

Updates from Affiliates

- Jane Gralla – Children’s Hospital Research Institute Biostatistics Core does not currently receive direct FTE salary support. However, it uses School of Medicine BERD SEED funds to offset subsidized consultation rates for junior faculty investigators up to 40 hours per project. Current intention is to provide only use BERD seeds for grant application support in the future.

- Doug Everett – National Jewish Health uses its subcontract support to provide consultation and analysis for unfunded projects. A few investigators are heavy users of this service.

- Matt McQueen – CU Boulder – Consulting, assistance with grant writing, mentoring K-awardees. Matt has also provided a couple of workshops for post-docs, etc. It’s not all "bio" statistics, some statistical consulting with the Business School, etc. He is stretched pretty thin with the volume of requests.

- Sangeetha Rao – Colorado State – Provides consulting plus work on a variety of expanded projects, as well as grant writing and mentorship on projects and publications.

- Stan Xu – Kaiser Permanente – Provides consultation as a biostatistician, helps with grant proposals, serves on PhD dissertation committees, and develops research methods papers.

- Becki Bucher-Bartelson – Denver Health (Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center) – Provides consulting, grant writing, and develops and teaches short courses at DHHA as well as at AMC.

Updates from the Director and Discussions

- Nichole and Miranda coordinate projects and grant writing under the CBC and BERD. Provides consulting, grant prep, Biostatistics Short Courses (currently offering a new hybrid online/in-person course), other seminars (Bayesian, microbiome), employing/mentoring student Research Assistants, protocol review, and administration for the BERD program campus-wide.

- Budget has been trimmed over the past few years, but is now stable. Affiliates’ budget was rumored to be cut in half, but that is at the Tim Lockie level. Affiliates should check on this. If budgets are indeed being cut, fewer investigators/projects would be able to be helped. Nichole would help communicate this to Ron and Tim.

- This coming project year’s budget will go into the renewal application for the next five-year cycle.
• Experience shows approximately 20 hours or more for an RO1 grant preparation on average. If funded at 1350 "billable hours," only a few grants can be supported along with "walk-in" consulting.

• Nichole cannot include affiliates’ biostatistics reports in the BERD reports. Affiliate biostatistician reports need to be included in the affiliates’ overall reports.

• How can sites communicate needs and institutional support so Ron can lobby for adequate support?

• New RFA – BERD mostly stayed the same although there were other changes in aims. RFA stipulates that people who have grants and are at the analysis stage need to have adequate budgets for biostatistics to do their analyses.

• For Pediatrics, the BERD SEED funds will be drying up, so Nichole will discuss with Jane getting direct FTE support for a Peds biostatistician to do grant support at no charge and so forth. Matt Mulvahill is not available for this since he is working on specific projects under Aim 3.

• People are now paying full price for analysis through the CBC, not subsidized by the BERD for analysis. No decrease in demand. Perhaps the CBC is losing projects since there is no increase in demand, either.

• National CTSA network might help with multi-center trials, including behavioral, electronic health record – not necessarily traditional drug trials. Example of multi-million-dollar trials through a central coordinating center such as Duke. RICs (Recruitment Innovation Centers), TICs (Trial Innovation Centers) for multi-center trials. Affiliates may want to participate.

• The renewal application for the next cycle is due in May. Sections like BERD are due next week. Only three pages for BERD. Affiliates need to submit their own pages.

• Matt needs FTE to not just support junior investigator grant writing, but also to provide consulting and reviewing protocols for senior investigators as well. He is trying to adapt for changing needs, which are not just medical – general biostatistics as well as other statistics support as well. Priorities may come up (such as multi-center TICs projects), but he still needs to continue existing work.

Next Meeting

• The suggestion to have EC meetings approximately every six months, mostly as a reporting and updating function, was met with general agreement. Next meeting will be in September. Tuesdays at 9:00-10:00 seem to work well. John will send an Outlook invite.

• In the meantime, affiliates are encouraged to email Nichole regarding specific needs so she can advocate on your behalf with Ron Sokol and Tim Lockie.