School of Medicine
Bridge Funding Program

Academic Senate
Planning and Budget Committee
February 14, 2008

The Problem

- Percent of awards funded by the NIH and other extramural sources is at a low compared to recent history
- NIH grants are typically cut by 12.5-30%
- Significant number of successful faculty who have already lost or are in jeopardy of losing greater than 40% of their research funding

A Potential Solution

A bridge funding program whose goal is to provide temporary funding while a Principal Investigator attempts to get refunded

Awards

1. Maximum of one year or until the PI re-establishes funding (whichever comes first)
2. Consideration will be given to:
   - Need
   - Department Chair's assessment
   - Strength of the overall research program
Awards cont.

3. Maximum of $100,000

4. When PI re-establishes funding, unspent funds must be returned to the Bridge Funding Program
   - Chair and PI sign letter agreeing
   - Made in 6 month installments

Review Process

- Application requires minimal work by PI (includes budget template)
- 2 cycles per year
- Review by a faculty committee

Funding Structure

- Awards funded 1/3 each:
  - SOM
  - Campus
  - Departments

- Campus and SOM Dean’s Office each committed $1.5M (to be matched by home departments of PIs receiving awards)

- Total: $4.5M

First cycle – May 2007

- 29 applicants
- 11 awards ($44,000-$100,000)
- Total awarded: $738,329
- One award returned ($100,000)
Second cycle – November 2007

- 9 applicants
- 6 awards ($45,000-$100,000)
- Total awarded: $535,935

Future Directions of the Program

- Mentoring
  - Introduced informally by the review committee
  - May formalize
    - those awarded bridge funds
    - perhaps more importantly those not
- Training
  - Potential to award funds for upper level graduate students whose PIs cannot afford to support them

Duration of Program

- Originally planned for 2 years
- Anticipate new faculty will become at risk
- Will not allocate all $4.5M within 2 years at current rate
- Granted a no cost extension

Conclusion

Many of our faculty have been extremely successful at securing extramural funding for their research in the past and it is essential that we support those who will likely be successful again if given the opportunity to continue their research while reapplying for funding.