

LIFE TECH FLORIDA
Executive Committee Conference Call
October 19, 2011

I. Review of Meeting Minutes 9-23-11

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting on September 23, 2011 at the FIU Reagan House were reviewed and approved.

II. Perspective on Biotech Innovation --- Jack Lord, MD

Dr. Jack Lord, Chief Innovation Officer at the University of Miami, was introduced to the group. Dr. Lord began in his new role at UM on September 1, 2011. He spoke about the focus on research commercialization and tech transfer to spawn innovation in medicine and healthcare. As an example, UM established a Tissue Bank now located in its Research Park to provide bone and tissue grafts for transplantation in patients. He spoke about his experience with Third Rock Ventures in Boston, a firm focused on working with the scientific and business communities to launch life science companies that will achieve breakthroughs in medicine.

Dr. Lord discussed the current initiative spearheaded by Mayor Bloomberg in New York City on Advanced Gene Sequencing, where 11 universities and industry partners are each investing in a collaborative venture to advance genome sequencing. Similarly, it may be possible for LTF member universities and institutions to agree to make investments in regional life sciences innovation. Dr. Lord was part of the team that created the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care, a national database that uses Medicare data to analyze variations in the distribution of health care resources. From that experience, Dr. Lord stated that a combination of commitment, persistence, and fearlessness is needed if we are to accomplish LTF strategic goals.

Because of Miami's geographic location, the city is a natural destination that attracts people. There is a density of international talent that we can develop and retain with more intentionality rather than merely by accident. He stated that if LTF can develop the technology backbone and infrastructure for a life sciences industry cluster over time, it would be a significant contribution to spurring an innovation economy. He suggested that regenerative medicine would be a fertile area for the future, making investments in stem cells, personalized medicine, and management of chronic illness.

III. Dresden Concept Technology Platform --- Ivan Baines, PhD

Dr. Ivan Baines led the group in a discussion of the Dresden Concept Technology Platform, a model we aim to replicate as a collaborative platform for research among LTF universities and institutions. Temporary passwords were provided so that participants can navigate through the website during the discussion and see first-hand how it works. There are four major research institutes and top-ranked universities that are part of the initiative. The

Dresden platform provides scientific equipment, services, and technologies that are offered by one or more of the partner institutions assembled in a single database and portal. Scientists and member institutions are able to gain an overview of the available infrastructure so that collaboration and synergy in research can be achieved. Unused capacity can be identified and redistributed throughout the region, thus maximizing research productivity overall, decreasing the maintenance costs, and increasing revenue for those who have excess capacity. In reviewing the Dresden platform, Dr. Baines demonstrated how to navigate the database, showing the detailed profiles of scientific equipment and technologies, as well as research groups with their particular expertise. The platform includes not only profiles of available equipment and technology but also a booking and billing system, and an infrastructure for user authentication.

A discussion of issues related to the shared technology/research platform ensued. The platform when created can showcase excellence in research in the region and may be able to help in recruitment of researchers from other areas. An issue presented was the different levels of willingness among institutions to share their data. Moving forward, FIU CIO Bobby Grillo stated that it would be important to engage in this activity both the CIOs of member institutions as well as the VPs of Research, since we need both the technical expertise and the content on research facilities and equipment. It would be a significant advantage to be able to conduct a single search for instruments or expertise, and it would be useful to be able to do it at a laboratory and department level. Generating public funds to support this endeavor may be an attractive carrot to motivate institutions to participate. However, it was pointed out that the required investment is relatively low, mostly staff time in collecting, inputting, and organizing the data.

The question was raised about whether we can use the existing Library databases ? If we bring in data from existing databases, how do we decide the form field ? There has to be a level of conformity in order to make the database searchable in a consistent fashion. Dr. Baines pointed out the impact of the Dresden Technology Platform in Germany. Ten years ago, Dresden was not even in the top 50 and currently is number 1 in terms of research productivity in all of Germany. It is also the most cost-effective research cluster as a result of this collaborative platform. A shared platform can be a vehicle for raising awareness, breaking down barriers among institutions, and overall a feeder for collaboration. For South Florida, this could be an important competitive advantage that would benefit even early stage companies that need laboratory facilities or equipment. We need to ask ourselves: Are there other domains of shared infrastructure we can identify ?

IV. Memorandum of Understanding – Divina Grossman, PhD

Dr. Grossman invited comments or feedback on the MOU disseminated to everyone for signing. Several members have already signed the MOU and returned to us, but others have yet to execute theirs. Dr. Grossman’s office will follow up with those who have not returned their signed agreements.

V. Logo and Life Tech Florida Communication Plan – Divina Grossman, PhD

Dr. Grossman updated everyone on the status of the LTF name and logo. FIU's External Relations Dept. is working on the logo; we are awaiting the outcome of the trademark issue related to the name Life Tech Florida. We will wait until these issues are resolved before we go live with the LTF web page and asset map data.

VI. Adjournment. President Rosenberg adjourned the call at 3:00 PM.