2:05p.m.
Dr. Thornton called the meeting to order, and thanked Mr. Sidney Evans and the Finance staff for preparing the materials for the meeting. Ms. Borggren walked through the packet of information that was distributed, including 3 BAC member proposals.

In reviewing the minutes of the April 29 meeting, Dr. Hines inquired about the note that funding for renovations to the C. B. Powell building related to the School of Communications’ accreditation was included in the FY2010 budget for deferred maintenance. The School had understood that the work would begin earlier. Ms. Borggren agreed to contact PFM about their plans for C. B. Powell.

Minutes from the April 29 BAC meeting were approved. Dr. Thornton thanked Provost office staff and Finance for continued website development. He then called on Dr. Newton to present the Health Sciences Budget proposal.

Dr. Newton began by stating that the Health Sciences budget preparation focused on accreditation-driven issues and needs. The accrediting body for the College of Medicine had previously identified key areas as needing attention, particularly improvements in the library and in the hiring of additional basic science faculty.

Dr. Newton said that through the Faculty Practice Plan (FPP), new clinical physician faculty can support themselves. She noted that the FPP is projected to be at worst breakeven, or perhaps even turn a small profit for the first time in FY2010. FPP net collectible revenues are projected to be $19 - $20 million for FY2009, and approximately $25 million for FY2010. Dr. Newton stated that this revenue growth is enabled by the
partnership between Howard and the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) of George Washington University. This partnership is also enabling Howard to acquire a critical technology, the electronic medical record. Mr. Lawson asked about a possible duplication of effort between staff at Howard and MFA. Dr. Newton stated that this was not the case - MFA staff support the backoffice operations, while FPP staff focus on patient interface. Mr. Lawson then asked about information delivery from HU to MFA, citing examples of billing issues. Dr. Newton acknowledged that information flow had been an issue in the past and that any problems have been identified and will be addressed and corrected. She also noted that any expenses currently incurred because the capturing of billing information is not yet fully automated are minimal.

Following up on an email request, Dr. Betsey asked whether any HUH costs were included in the budget figures the BAC has been examining. Ms. Borggren answered that the BAC has been dealing only with the University budget, and the HUH is managed separately. Dr. Newton added that no HUH expenses were included with the FPP. Mr. Evans had agreed to respond to Dr. Betsey’s email.

Ms. Fax asked if the Medicine accrediting body made allowances for the needed scientists to be hired over 2 years, or must they all be brought on board in FY2010 in order to achieve accreditation. Dr. Newton said that she would research that question.

Dr. Mitchell asked if Howard physicians conduct their private practices collectively to try to increase efficiency and savings. Dr. Newton stated all Howard physicians practice through the FPP, which is one entity. Partnering with MFA is also part of the effort to share fixed costs and achieve economies of scale.

Dr. Mitchell asked if any investments were planned to help increase revenue. Dr. Newton answered that the best investment is to hire more physicians. This helps generate additional revenue for the FPP, and for the Hospital as well.

Mr. Lawson asked how many faculty the basic sciences the College of Medicine currently has. Dr. Newton will also research that. Dr. Fanara asked were 17 more faculty needed for Health Sciences, per the proposal. Dr. Newton answered yes, including some clinical faculty who could support themselves.

Dr. Mitchell inquired about the request for additional funding for the HS library, particularly the purchase of additional journals. Dr. Newton stated that this item included the rapidly growing costs of access to online databases. She added that this item is also important to more robust research and increased external grant funding.

Dr. Thornton then moved to the presentation of BAC members’ budget proposals, asking Dr. Mitchell to discuss his proposal for a Capital Budget for Multi-user, High-End Research Instrumentation (CBMHERI). Such a budget would enhance competitiveness by funding the acquisition of single major items of research equipment exceeding $750,000 each. The budget would be established within the Office of the Vice President of Research and Compliance. Equipment purchased under this program would be time-
shared by at least three Howard faculty with externally funded research grants. Evaluation of the associated research to be performed and its impact would determine the projects that will be funded. The CBMHERI capital budget would be generated by re-formulation of the “supplies” component of the current Howard University budget. It is recommended that the budget be established at $4 million for FY2010 and 2011, and at $2 million for the ensuing 3 years. Mr. Lawson asked if Dr. Mitchell expected the applicants to be interdisciplinary teams. The teams certainly could be interdisciplinary, but could be from the one department if all were involved in substantive externally funded research. Mr. Lawson also asked who would decide which proposal to accept. The Office of the Vice President for Research and Compliance would determine the process for evaluation of proposals and awarding of funds.

Dr. Thornton then asked Dr. Blackwell to present his proposal on “smart classrooms”. Dr. Blackwell stated that Howard has twenty-seven (27) “smart” classrooms, representing a multi-million dollar investment. To upgrade or refurbish these classrooms would cost no more than about $25,000 each, according to one vendor estimate, and could cost less. Dr. Blackwell stated that up-to-date classrooms and equipment would help expedite preventative maintenance contracts, which would provide a cost savings to Howard. Currently, approximately $1 million worth of equipment can’t be used to its full extent due to lack of upgrades.

Dr. Schwartzman asked if wireless equipment was included in this estimate. Mr. Lawson asked whether existing staff in ISAS can maintain the “smart” classrooms. Dr. Thornton stated that Dr. Minor can elaborate on these points when he meets with the BAC.

Dr. Schwartzman asked if ad hoc, less expensive measures can be taken, e.g. using projectors to effect a “smart” classroom environment. Dr. Livingston stated that this has been done in the past. Ms. Fax noted that using projectors and computers can simulate a “smart” classroom effect, she supports Dr. Blackwell’s proposal as a better long-term, coordinated solution. She also noted that a collective effort facilitates savings. Dr. Middendorf noted that students have been disappointed when they got here and found that Howard lacks “smart” classrooms and other facilities and equipment that had been available to them in their high schools. Dr. Newton noted that user training is key, regardless of the approach taken, to ensure that the equipment is properly used and maintained. In addition, it was noted that proper security was needed, to prevent loss of valuable equipment.

Dr. Thornton then asked Dr. Middendorf to present his proposal on fostering the growth of intellectual capital at Howard. Dr. Middendorf began by noting that his proposal dovetailed with that of Dr. Mitchell, in the supporting Howard’s goal of increased status as a top research institution. Achieving this goal will require University investment in at least four critical areas: 1) human capital, 2) connections, 3) processes, and 4) facilities. With regard to the first item, he noted special opportunities to recruit talented young researchers, as their job prospects are affected by the current economic downtown. In the long run good researchers pay for themselves, through more grants obtained. Dr. Thornton noted that the STEM initiative included provisions for new faculty hires.
Dr. Middendorf then stated that HU must facilitate interdisciplinary research and provide support for interdisciplinary initiatives and programs, improve the grant submission and procurement process to facilitate efficiency, and upgrade facilities such as libraries and the databases. Specifically, his proposal recommends:

- $1 million to hire 10 new STEM research faculty, including start-up funds;
- $500 thousand to develop interdisciplinary programs, such as the “shovel-ready” Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Environmental Studies;
- $500 thousand in AY2009-10 to reengineer University processes for hiring, procurement, and grants management;
- $1 million for facilities, including increased access to online journals; $500 thousand to redesign of the university webpages/internet experience; $1.5 million for the purchase of new equipment.

Dr. Newton noted that these improvements would help attract quality faculty - a grant “rainmaker” that she recruited turned Howard down due to inferior infrastructure that would hamper research. Dr. Schwartzman added some successfully recruited young faculty had later left the University due to these issues.

Mr. Lawson asked how interdisciplinary hires would be determined. Dr. Middendorf stated that the VP of Research would evaluate such requests. Dr. Bell noted that these are all excellent suggestions, and show the power of teams like the BAC to improve Howard.

Dr. Thornton then introduced Dr. Bonner, Acting Vice President of Research and Compliance. Dr. Bonner stated that her organization and she are committed to facilitating smoother research, and they have made much progress in the 7 months she has been in her position. Dr. Bonner said that she is committed to having $100 million in Howard’s grant portfolio by June 30.

She then presented her funding requests for FY2010. These include additional staffing, including 2 research administrators and an attorney. The latter would work in conjunction with OCG, to facilitate the approval of research contracts. Also in conjunction with the OGC, the research office needs to develop programs in intellectual property and technology transfer. The Office of Sponsored Programs must move into new space, and needs upgraded technology. Dr. Bonner also noted the need for infrastructure improvements to support research, citing the Beltsville campus which has funded research but in a dilapidated building.

Dr. Betsey asked how many research administrators are currently on staff. The answer is 3, plus 1 accountant who multitasks. Dr. Middendorf asked how this number compared with other universities’ staff levels. Dr. Bonner stated that it is comparable, and that she is looking for the right people in a very competitive market.
Dr. Bonner then touched one some of the factors required for Howard to achieve its goal of being a top 50 research institution. Dr. Mitchell asked for: (1) a list of the current top 50 research institutions; (2) clarification of the criteria that define a top 50 research institution; (3) whether President Ribeau has developed a strategy to achieve this designation; and (4) what budget is needed to achieve this designation. Dr. Thornton stated that he will send out a formal, written response on this issue.

Mr. Lawson commented that many people tend to equate grantsmanship with research though they are not the same. He then asked what Dr. Bonner’s organization plans to do to increase all research activity. Dr. Bonner noted the presence of an in-house writer who focuses only on developing grant proposals. Dr. Schwartzman stated that Howard lags behind other “Category 1” research institutions in faculty pay.

Dr. Farquharson asked about the incentive to obtain grants, since Howard’s former faculty incentive program was deemed non-compliant by federal auditors. Dr. Bonner noted that excellence, intellectual contribution, and service to students and fellow scholars can all be motivating.

Dr. Livingston stated that the HU culture must be changed to one more open and receptive to research. Dr. Thornton noted that the formation of BAC indicates the beginning of a cultural shift, and that administration would be accountable for the progress of BAC recommendations and other changes. President Ribeau’s strategic vision is to reorganize and realign Howard. The current FY2010 budget proposal contains a $10 million “down payment” toward this objective. Dr. Thornton did note the continuing challenges inherent in a change of this magnitude. Resources must be reallocated and priorities must be re-focused. BAC is a key part of the process.

Dr. Mitchell noted that facilities, systems and processes must be upgraded. The infrastructure base to support a top 50 research institution must be put in place. Dr. Mitchell stated that, in his opinion, insufficient time as been spent and budget identified to successfully achieve this objective.

Dr. Bell did agree on the need to fund strategic priorities including the many factors that support research. However, he noted that more money by itself does not necessarily lead to more effectiveness.

Dr. Middendorf noted that Howard’s history, mission and place in academia are unique, which must be kept in mind as the University seeks to evolve in the direction of other research universities.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.