




# CIRM

## CALIFORNIA'S STEM CELL AGENCY

*California Institute for Regenerative Medicine*

### Memorandum

To: Members of the ICOC

From: C. Randal Mills, Ph.D.   
President and Chief Executive Officer

RE: Agenda Item 12

Date: January 20, 2015

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#### **Proposal**

Request ICOC concurrence of the CIRM team's recommendation not to prepare a concept plan for the continuation of the Training Program.

Note: this agenda item is only addressing the Training Program, which involves graduate students, as well as postdoctoral and clinical fellows. The Creativity (high school) and Bridges (undergraduate) programs have already been extended by the ICOC (October 2014).

#### **Background**

The Training Program, initiated in 2005, was to support training of graduate students, along with postdoctoral and clinical fellows in stem cell research. The goals of this program were to facilitate training in the emerging field of stem cell science and to expand stem cell research in California by creating a cadre of scientists with appropriate knowledge and skills. The training grant programs have featured mentored laboratory research as well as seminar series, journal clubs and courses in stem cell biology and its application to health and disease.

Two successive grant programs, Training I and Training II, operating for a total of 9 consecutive years, have supported 17 training programs at California universities and research institutes. The programs have trained 859 CIRM Scholars. These trainees have worked in 436 different laboratories on a broad range of research projects, with the majority focused on basic research. CIRM Scholars have been authors on 887 scientific publications.

CIRM committed a total of \$130.9 million to the Training Program. This included the following:

- Training I (2005) \$38.9 million
- Training II (2009) \$45.2 million
- 3-year extension of Training II (2011) \$46.8 million

The average cost per Scholar trained under these programs is approximately \$152,000 – 34% of whom are graduate students, 48% post-doctoral, and 18% clinical fellows.

In December 2013, CIRM presented to the ICOC a plan to extend the training program for an additional 3 years. The ICOC decided not to extend funding of the current training grant program beyond its previously approved term and requested that the CIRM team present to the Board a concept plan for a new Training Program.

#### **CIRM Provides Significant Funding for Training**

It is important to note that this program was initiated in the earlier days of stem cell research and since that time the field has evolved and expanded. Today CIRM financially supports the training and education far more Scholars through the funding of research grants than through our Training Program. In fact last year alone, of the 725 graduate students and fellows funded by CIRM, 444 or 61% were through research grants at a cost of \$25 million.

An important distinction between the two sources of funding for training is that under the research grant programs, each project is individually vetted by the GWG and approved by the ICOC, providing more visibility and a greater opportunity for alignment with CIRM's mission.

### **Rationale for the Proposal**

Following extensive internal discussions and consideration of CIRM's priorities and resources, the CIRM team determined that a new training grant program is no longer an optimal method of supporting the education and training of stem cell scientists.

CIRM believes that supporting the training of new stem cell scientists is best accomplished by bolstering funding for our research grants programs, particularly the earlier Discovery and Translational phases where each program can be individually evaluated for its merit and contribution to CIRM's mission.

CIRM will be presenting to the ICOC concept plans for the Discovery and Translational phases of CIRM 2.0 within the next 6 months. We propose to encompass training in those concept plans.

**Recommendation:** Approve the CIRM team's determination not to present a concept proposal for a training grant program at this time.