

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MEETING OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC SESSION

September 19, 2011

The Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council (“STAC”) met on Monday, September 19, 2011 in Public Session at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Providence, Rhode Island pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Members and public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island Law.

The following Members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Peter Alfonso (Co-Chair), Pierre Corriveau, David Hibbitt, Tony Pankau, Thomas Rockett, Peter Snyder and Donald Stanford. Members absent were Clyde Briant (Co-chair), Saul Kaplan, Margaret Leinen, Stuart McGuigan and Jeffrey Seemann.

Also present during the meeting were Governor Chafee, Lt. Governor Roberts, and RIEDC’s staff. Co-chair Alfonso presided over the meeting assisted by Christine Smith.

Welcome

Christine Smith welcomed everyone and stated that the agenda would include a presentation by Joanne Carney, Director of the Office of Government Relations at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) on the prospect for future federal R&D funding in light of the ongoing calls for cuts in federal discretionary spending levels. Ms. Smith added the agenda would also include a presentation by Jason Harry, Founder and CEO, Lucidux an early-stage medical device company and recipient of a 2010 STAC collaborative research award. Lucidux is developing advanced imaging technologies for minimally invasive surgery and will provide an update to the Council on the status of the project. Ms. Smith extended a special welcome to incoming Co-Chair Peter Alfonso and new member Tony Pankau. She also recognized former members David Farmer and Kimball Hall for their contributions to the Council.

Ms. Smith recognized RIEDC Executive Director Keith Stokes who commented on recent work of the RIEDC including the agency’s efforts to realign internal resources, strengthen the capital continuum available to RI ventures and re-brand RI as a place to do business.

Approval of Minutes

Citing no changes, upon a motion duly made by Thomas Rockett and seconded by Pierre Corriveau, the minutes of the June 8, 2011 STAC meeting were accepted.

Federally Funded R&D and the Budget Ceiling Debate

Joanne Carney presented an overview of trends in federal funding for R&D. She stated that \$149.1 billion in federal R&D investment is spread over two dozen departments and agencies, but only two (NIH and DOD) manage more than 70% of this investment. She noted that while federal support for R&D has grown slowly over the last few decades, private industry R&D has grown significantly. Recent federal spending priority areas include jumpstarting innovation, clean energy/climate science, education of STEM teachers and wireless infrastructure. If Congress cannot find spending modifications mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011, mandatory sequestration would result in discretionary cuts of 20% for defense and 7.8% for non-defense for FY13

RI Research Alliance Progress Report

Jason Harry reported on the STAC-funded research his company Lucidux is conducting in collaboration with Dr. Gabriel Taubin at Brown and Drs. Gyan Pareek and George Haleblan at RI Hospital. The technology being developed and tested by the team will provide surgeons with a fast and complete understanding of anatomy in complex procedures. It will also allow them to visualize subtle surface textures and identify the geometry and condition of internal tissues. This type of visualization is groundbreaking for surgeons who seek to detect surface abnormalities such as cancerous tissue. STAC has provided critical seed funding of an early stage idea and the team already has been successful in securing two sources for follow-on funding: they were named the 2011 Entrepreneurial Track winner of the RI Biz Plan and they have received a \$180K NIH Phase 1 SBIR award from the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering.

RI NSF EPSCoR Director's Report

Peter Alfonso briefed the Council on the current status of Rhode Island's NSF EPSCoR activities. He noted RI is beginning the second year of a five year, \$20 million grant that will advance knowledge about the interaction of climate variability with the evolution of marine communities and their connection to the watersheds. Funding from the grant will also support RI researchers in use of molecular and cellular techniques, cyberinfrastructure, computational biology, pioneering visualization techniques, and interdisciplinary approaches. He reported that a team from RI recently participated in a reverse site visit to the National Science Foundation to present accomplishments of Year 1 including the development of business plans for the research cores, hiring of ten faculty members, participation of 8 students in the Slater Fellows program, submission of 22 proposals that resulted in \$8.5 million of additional funding and training of undergraduate and high school students.

Report on Council Initiatives

Christine Smith reported on STAC efforts to support collaborative initiatives around innovation metrics, R&D and STEM education. The Council is partnering with the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce to produce an Innovation Index that will provide an independent review

of our progress in meeting long term and immediate economic goals. To help build new and bigger collaborations, the Council continues to lead a quarterly meeting of sponsored research and development professionals from the universities, colleges and hospitals. Since formation of the group, URI, Brown, RISD, Roger Williams University and RI College have hosted meetings. Other upcoming activities include a reception hosted in partnership with two RI COBRES to showcase hospital research, a briefing in partnership with RISD on the STEM to STEAM initiative and launch of the 2011 Cyber Security Challenge initiative by Rep. Langevin.

Adjournment

There being no further business Co-Chair Alfonso adjourned the meeting.

Christine M.B. Smith
Secretary