

Board Participants: Megan Sykes, Mark Anderson, Ignacio Anegon, Robert Balderas, Olivier Boyer, Todd Brusko, Jane Buckner, Betty Diamond, Stephanie Eisenbarth, Jane Grogan, Terri Laufer, Megan Levings, Jonathan Maltzman, Joshua Milner, Jordan Pober, Jeffrey Rathmell, Elaine Reed, Leonie Taams, Laurence Turka. **Board Participant via Zoom:** Bill Robinson. **Apologies:** Miriam Merad. **Staff:** Caley Mutrie, Betsy Smith, Melinda Waite.

Minutes

I. **Welcome and Introductions** – M. Sykes called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. ET. C. Mutrie confirmed that a quorum is present.

1. **Recognition of Directors Completing Terms:** The Board thanked the departing Board members, J. Maltzman as Secretary/Treasurer, J. Grogan as Scientific Program Committee Chair, and R. Balderas as At-Large Director.
2. **2023 Election Results and Introduction of the 2023-2025 Board of Directors** – The Board reviewed the documents.

II. **CONSENT AGENDA AND MINUTES – APPROVAL REQUESTED**

1. **Minutes**
 - a. April 18 Board of Directors Meeting
 - b. May 17 Executive Committee Meeting
2. **Leadership Meetings Schedule – June 2023 Through June 2024**
3. **2022 Board Orientation Resources [Online Repository](#)**
4. **Management Services Review**
5. **FOCIS Key Performance Indicators:**
 - a. [FOCIS Dashboard](#)
 - b. [FOCIS Membership Dashboard](#)
 - c. [FOCIS Marketing Analytics Dashboard](#)

The Board reviewed the documents. The 2023-24 Board orientation will be held in late August or September. In July, the Board will be asked to complete the annual performance review survey for the FOCIS Executive Director, the FOCIS team, and Association Acumen services. The results will be reviewed with the Board at its next meeting in August.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and consent agenda as presented. The motion passed.

III. **DISCUSSION & ACTION AGENDA**

1. **FOCIS Annual Meeting / Fundraising Campaign**
 - a. **FOCIS 2023 Recap and Snapshot and Abstract Reports** – The Board reviewed the documents. J. Grogan shared a brief recap, noting that there were four to six last-minute speaker and chair declines, and the slots have been filled. The Board suggested that the program committee remind speakers to speak to the event's broad audience - not just experts in their field. Also, trainees and oral abstract presenters need to be reminded to present broadly such as a recommendation to include a general context slide in their deck. The Board considered having a late-breaking invited speakers' session.
 - b. **FOCIS 2024 Scientific Program Planning** – J. Milner reported that the Scientific Program Committee will meet tonight.
 - c. **Achieving Broad Disciplinary Content in Annual Meeting Program** – M. Sykes and J. Pober remarked that several years ago there was an intention to target several areas that were underrepresented within FOCIS. Hence there was more explicit programming of the invited speakers (keynote, thematic) in these areas. The areas were allergy, transplantation, clinical trials, and translational immunology studies regarding drugs and trials. There were also recommended speakers and societies, such as including an Immune Responses in Gene Therapy and M. Roncarolo. The Board discussed how many companies speaking are not sponsoring and vice versa. The Board discussed adding additional pharmaceutical company representatives to the Scientific Program Committee, noting the necessary remediation needed for potential conflict of interest. The Board discussed adding phase three clinical trials discussions at the meeting and having pharma companies share what did not work and what they have abandoned. The Board discussed securing an exclusive sponsor for the 2024 President's Reception – hopefully held at the Salesforce building. The Board discussed targeted fundraising by the host city and expanding focus on biotech VCs and start-ups in solicitations. The Board

suggested soliciting companies with an in-person meeting, noting the anticipated additional costs to support these efforts.

Action: C. Mutrie and L. Turka will expand the membership and charge of the Industry Relations Committee.

Action: C. Mutrie will contact Salesforce to determine availability of the venue.

d. Fundraising Campaign

- i. **2023 Campaign Report** - The Board reviewed the documents.
- ii. **Future Fundraising and Suggestions for FOCIS 2024 San Francisco, June 18-21** - L. Turka shared the plan to start fundraising earlier, in mid-September, and recommended that keynotes be confirmed by then.

2. Finance

- a. **Board Summary** – J. Maltzman provided remarks and the Board reviewed the documents.
- b. **Statements of Financial Activity as of May 31, 2023** - J. Maltzman shared highlights, including that FOCIS has ~\$2.8M in the bank, the YTD interest is significantly over budget as are dividends, and the strategic planning meeting will be under budget. The Board expects some Annual Meeting expenses will be under budget and registration revenue is expected to increase in June.
- c. **Investment Management and Performance Report** – The Board reviewed the documents from the financial advisor:
 - i. **Cash Management Memo – Proposal to Move Short-term Operating Funds (Money Market and CD) into Portfolio for Greater Yields** – The Board reviewed the proposal to move these funds into a portfolio for greater yields at Schwab. They noted that there are short-term funds and liquid/immediately available and the current yield presented for these investment options is net of 0.25% advisor fee. The Board discussed the amount of funds to transfer, noting that moving money takes time.
Motion: A motion was made and seconded that pending a cash flow analysis by staff and in consultation with the FOCIS Treasurer, FOCIS will move short-term reserves into higher interest-bearing accounts at Schwab.
Action: C. Mutrie and W. Robinson will do a cash flow analysis to determine recommended funds transfer amount. The amount to be transferred will be calculated according to the FOCIS policy.
- d. **2022 Draft Audit** - The auditors completed the 2022 audit, and the Board reviewed their report. The auditors' opinion is that the financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of FOCIS as of December 31, 2022, and 2021, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for those years.
Motion: A motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report, including the 2022 audit, as presented. The motion passed.

3. Governance

- a. **Steering Committee Meeting Recap** – M. Sykes shared that during the meeting, there was a recognition of departing and incoming Steering Committee societies, the announcement of a new member society (The Autoimmune Association), and there was a member society application that was reviewed and approved (European Mast Cell Basophil Research Network). Attendees gave feedback on FOCIS 2023 and shared thoughts on the FOCIS 2024 program development and MSS application process.
- b. **2023-2025 Strategic Plan and Action Plan** – M. Sykes reviewed the executive summary document. The Board had a lengthy discussion on different approaches to prioritize, fund, and staff the action plan. The Board discussed establishing both communications and governance working groups that will report back on what is necessary to execute the action plan. At that time, there will be a discussion on the additional FTE needed with communications skills. The Board discussed the minimal need yet urgency to add an 0.5 FTE to continue operating (without changing work), noting that additional FTE will be evaluated later.
Motion: A motion was made and seconded to increase the FOCIS management fees for another 0.5 FTE effective July 1. The motion passed.

Action: B. Smith will prepare a management services contract addendum to increase the fee by 0.5 FTE, no other terms change.

Decision: FOCIS assigned group owners to each category of the action plan as defined below. They will report back to the Board in September/October, prior to final budget review, so that any anticipated expenses can be considered for the 2024 budget.

- The Education Committee will evaluate Education/Programs category's tactics
- The Scientific Program Committee will evaluate the Annual Meeting category's tactics
- The WICI Committee will evaluate the DEI category's tactics and Steering Committee
- The Membership Committee will evaluate the Membership category's tactics and may involve the FCE Committee
- A governance working group will be established to evaluate the Governance/Structure and External Relations & Global Outreach categories' tactics, and evaluate FOCIS Bylaws
- A communication working group will be established to evaluate the Communications category's tactics
- A working group will be established to evaluate the Fundraising/Development/Industry Relations and Revenue Generation & Diversification categories' tactics

Action: M. Sykes, B. Diamond, J. Pober, O. Boyer, and J. Maltzman will serve on the governance/structure working group.

Action: I. Anegon, T. Brusko, J. Grogan, L. Taams, J. Buckner, M. Levings, and T. Laufer will serve on the communications working group

Action: L. Turka, O. Boyer, J. Grogan, and B. Balderas will serve on the Fundraising/Development/Industry Relations and Revenue Generation & Diversification working group. This will group will also consider the philanthropic giving-related tactic (#6 under the Fundraising/Development/Industry Relations category) and recommend how philanthropy can be approached within the FOCIS context, and identify a foundation to target and then establish what is needed for outreach.

- c. **Endorsed and Sponsored Meeting Support Policy, Application, and Selection Criteria** – The Board reviewed the document and discussed the need for a policy that defines how meeting and related activity support requests are processed. The Board agreed that they will determine the budget/if funds are available for this initiative as part of the overall FOCIS budgeting process.
Motion: A motion was made and seconded to approve the Endorsed and Sponsored Meeting Support Policy, application, and selection criteria as presented. The motion passed.
Action: C. Mutrie will update the appropriate collateral.
- d. **Developing Travel Awards for Needful Situations in Future Years** – The Board reviewed the document and noted the demand for travel awards from event registrants from developing countries. This opportunity is a future budget decision, and an application process will need to be developed.
Action: C. Mutrie will prepare a brief proposal with application and selection criteria for consideration and prioritization during the FOCIS budgeting process.

4. Related Organizations

- a. **APAAACI**
- i. **2023 Congress** – The Board discussed that the FOCIS symposium is confirmed and has been rescheduled to October 24. There are plans to organize a course on October 26, with an invitation for A. Abbas. The Education Committee is leading the course discussions for FOCIS.
- b. **IUIS**
- i. **Associate Membership and Observer Status at IUIS Council Meetings** – The Board reviewed the document. As an Associate Member, FOCIS may have a representative to attend the IUIS Council meetings as an observer. Ignacio Anegon will assume the FOCIS representative role initially and attend the IUIS Council meeting during the IUIS Congress in Cape Town.
- ii. **2023 Congress**

- a. **FOCIS Session** – The Board reviewed the document, noting that the FOCIS speakers and chairs have been confirmed and the IUIS early career speaker is still pending.
- b. **Small Meeting on FCE Collaboration** - A small meeting with leaders in immunology from Africa and FOCIS leaders is currently being planned. The discussion will focus on FOCIS collaboration opportunities with institutions in Africa, particularly regarding the FCE community. FOCIS staff is coordinating the scheduling of this meeting.

5. Education Committee

- a. Education Committee Report – The Board reviewed the document.
- b. Current Activities and Future Plans – The Board discussed their intention for an intentional restructuring of courses. FOCIS will only organize two international advanced courses annually. The US Advanced Course is running a financial deficit and the committee is looking for ways to reduce costs and raise more funds. The committee will move away from doing hybrid events and focus on in-person events where the attendee interactions are invaluable, and the events are more profitable.

There is a demand for more flexibility in education event structures – not necessarily a “course” and instead more symposium-style that would be developed by those within a country or an FCE. The difference between a course and a symposium also needs to be defined – noting the latter is more research-driven. The Education Committee oversees educational courses but not symposia. FOCIS does not currently have the staff time or financial resources available to manage more than the current portfolio of courses, but it could be planned/budgeted for. FCEs are potential collaborators of the symposia-style events and the FCE Committee was suggested to oversee them. The Board discussed how in Europe, many FCE directors were invited to have the course but also wanted to present their research independently of a course with FOCIS.

The Basic Immunology course has had a decline in attendance in the past few years. The committee does not plan to replace the existing faculty after 2024’s course but instead introduce a new course. The committee is considering course topics like a medical immunology course, a broad survey of all immunology topics, and defining what big clinical questions clinical immunologists face. The Board also suggested the past NIH’s demystifying medicine course that was very well attended, noting that this may recruit new people but may dissuade MDs that currently attend. The Board discussed the past Clinical Trials course that offered CME and was organized by T. Laufer and C. Greenbaum. The Board considered a course on human immunology in medicine. The Board discussed the change in attendees once CME was no longer provided, and that the focus of a new course should be for a younger audience and what they want/need.

Action: S. Eisenbarth and the Education Committee will continue the discussion. B. Balderas will join the committee for this discussion. O. Boyer and J. Millner also agreed to help the committee.

The Lupus and IBD hubs with an educational partner, SES, are in process.

6. FCE Committee – J. Rathmell/O. Boyer

- a. FCE Committee Report – The Board reviewed the document and remarks were brief due to time.

7. Membership & Scientific Outreach Committee

- a. Membership & Scientific Outreach Committee Report – The Board reviewed the document.
- b. Current Activities and Future Plans - The committee is investigating additional annual/year-round member benefits. The initial recommendation is for Member Societies to organize four virtual symposia annually that FOCIS members around the world would have access to. This initiative would have financial costs so a further discussion will be planned.

Action: The Membership Committee will collaborate with the Education and FCE Committees on the organization of virtual symposia.

8. Women in Clinical Immunology (WICI)

- a. Women in Clinical Immunology (WICI) Committee Report – The Board reviewed the document. The Board discussed their focus on developing a web presence with continual improvement. The committee is defining how to restructure their sub-committees while considering the DEI actions from the strategic plan. The committee is working on bringing their work “on the road” such as virtual events while partnering and collaborating with others to strengthen the Federation globally. The committee aims to broaden the WICI membership and have many volunteer opportunities to become involved. The committee will look at initiatives and determine if there are budgetary needs to bring forward to the Board, such as networking events.
- b. Current Activities and Future Plans
 - i. Online Speaker Database Project – The Board reviewed the document. The committee’s speaker database initiative is in process, and it will use the existing FOCIS database platform but enhance the demographic fields. The database hopefully also benefits the Scientific Program Committee’s work.

9. New Business

- b. **2024 Budgeting Process** - The Board discussed the process and that committees can expect to hear from FOCIS staff in August/September regarding budget requests.
- c. **2024 June Board Meeting** – The Board was asked to reflect upon when the Board meeting will be during the Annual Meeting, so it does not overlap with sessions, and to consider having a Board dinner.
- d. **2024 Juneteenth Day** – Now that it is a U.S. federal holiday, FOCIS should consider scheduling around this date in future Annual Meeting hotel contracts. C. Mutrie confirmed the next opportunity to do this is 2027.
- e. **2024 San Francisco** – The Board shared that the location of the hotel is not preferred, and other San Francisco hotels and other West Coast cities should be considered for future years, including multiple cities on both coasts, such as Seattle.

Action: C. Mutrie will add a discussion of the issues around scheduling the June in-person Board during the annual meeting for the August Board meeting.

10. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. ET.

Respectfully submitted by:



Melinda Waite
FOCIS Associate Executive Director