

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel
for Evaluation of Advanced Airbags**

February 22, 2005

Chairperson, Dr. Susan Ferguson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. in the Atlantic room of the Surfcomber Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida. All panel members and observers were present with the exception of members, Dr. Maria Segui-Gomez, Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr, and Dr. Kristin Poland and observer Robert Strassburger. Note: Danius Dalmotas, Chief of the Crashworthiness Research Division, Transport Canada, has joined the BRP since the last meeting. Dr. Ferguson immediately turned the floor over to Dr. Jerry Scally of Grumman.

Dr. Scally began a Power Point presentation entitled: "Case Delivery and Presentation". The stated goal of the presentation was to review a new electronic system for crash case viewing and solicit the help of the BRP in conducting a Beta test of the system. Dr. Scally began by reviewing the old paper process which used to take up to 18 months to obtain a copy of a case. In addition to being slow the old system was expensive, required manual data extraction and had large storage requirements. The current system uses a WEB Interface to copy pages individually to disk. It allows earlier access to preliminary cases (down to 70 days from date of crash) and has no end user costs. However, the current system has the following problems: can not copy data, can not import data into other systems, can not carry data electronically, produces a lot of paper and has a lot of incompatibilities. The future new system is based on a briefcase model using small zipped files in XML code. Data is shareable and can be directly downloaded from the WEB. Data can be imported into any other database. Dr. Scally noted that in the future all NASS and CIREN cases will go in to this system since it is a good way to quickly look at a case. Dr. Scally handed out CDs containing a Beta version of the new system and asked the BRP members for feedback by email to: scally@volpe.dot.gov.

Dr. Ferguson thanked Dr. Scally for the presentation and then asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the minutes of the October 5, 2004 meeting and if any changes were required. Dr. Ferguson asked Danius Dalmotas if the discussion of his presentation at the last meeting was accurate. Danius noted several minor edits. Hearing no further comments, the minutes were approved as written.

Dr. Ferguson asked Dr. Schneider to report on the status of his work with the NASS Zone Center personnel to modify the monthly case summary reports to make them more useful to the BRP for decision making. An extensive discussion of the purpose and usefulness of the summaries ensued. Don Bischoff noted that the principal original purpose of the summaries was to monitor the performance of the three new PSUs for acquisition rates on occupant interviews, full vehicle inspections and collection rates for the more severe crashes. In particular, there was some initial concern that the Miami/Dade team would have low acquisition rates for occupant interviews and vehicle inspections due to the large rental car fleets in the area. Monitoring has since shown that the acquisition rates, while lower than the other PSUs, are substantially higher than when the Miami/Dade team was an active PSU under the old expanded NASS system. Don concluded that we should abandon the effort to upgrade the summary since the original intent was no longer an issue as we enter the fourth year of data collection. Others argued that the summary might still be useful for pointing out cases of particular interest for anecdotal studies. Tom Carr noted that he uses it for monitoring progress of data collection under the Alliance contract. It was agreed that Larry and Tom will talk to the Zone Center about continuing to produce the summary but that no further effort to upgrade the summary will take place.

Dr. Ferguson asked Chip Chidester to report on the status of case collection at the 3 Alliance funded PSUs and other related work ongoing at NHTSA. Chip reported that NHTSA has added a CDS researcher at each of the three Alliance funded PSUs. Beginning April 1, 2005 an additional CDS researcher will be added to each of the PSUs (two NHTSA funded) as the Alliance funded researchers scales back to one. The status of case collection through 1-17-05 was reported as follows:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
NASS CDS	4239	4393	5164
Alliance funded	350	361	433
Total	4589	4754	5598

The total number of Alliance funded cases through 1/17/05 is 1144. Chip showed the acquisition rates for complete vehicle inspections and occupant interviews. As previously noted, the Miami/Dade rates are lower than system wide averages but higher than rates at the same location under the former NASS system.

Chip suggested that we expand case collection at the three PSUs to include rollovers and side impact since these are areas of current interest. Chip also noted that National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Survey cases are not currently being collected at these PSUs. The ensuing discussion noted that this was beyond the scope of the BRP as currently constituted and the issue was therefore tabled.

Dr. Ferguson asked Tom Carr to report on the status of the Alliance commitment to fund the BRP effort since we are now in the fourth and final year of the initial commitment. Tom said that the Alliance will sign new contracts in April to support one researcher at each of the 3 PSUs through the end of 2006. Proposal to extend funding beyond 2006 will be decided in the future as a “rolling” two year commitment that is reviewed annually.

Dr. Ferguson said that she would like to discuss the draft RFP for Analysis of NASS/CDS data that was prepared by Don Bischoff and circulated to the BRP since the last meeting. Dr. Ferguson started the discussion by noting that she would like to see the final report in a format that is “Journal ready”. Others argued that while a Journal ready format would be nice, that we still need a complete detailed reporting of all methodologies used, data runs, etc to facilitate a thorough review of the contractors work. It was ultimately decided to specify a Journal style final report with methodologies, data analysis details, etc. included as addendums to the report.

It was agreed that language be added to make it clear that the BRP would be evaluating the proposals based on technical and scientific merit and selecting the proposal(s) for award even though the Alliance would be funding the effort. It was also agreed that the FMVSS 208 discussion in the background section needed to be expanded to make it clear that the BRP was interested in how the recent changes to 208 may have influenced/encouraged/permitted the auto manufacturers to produce airbag systems that reduced the potential for occupant harm from the airbag system. Of course the BRP is also interested in whether this has led to reduced protection for certain classes of occupants such as large males in severe crashes.

There was an extensive discussion as to whether a summary of the preliminary data analyses conducted to date (as presented at the two public meetings held by the BRP) should remain in the Background section. Many felt that it was prejudicial and would

lead those responding to the RFP and others to believe that the BRP expected the detailed analyses to follow the trends noted in the preliminary analyses. Others thought that these analyses are already in the public domain and need to be included to make it clear that the BRP is expecting the proposed work to go beyond what has already been done. It was decided that all reference to prior analyses would be expurgated from the RFP to avoid any notion that the BRP had prejudged the outcome.

Dr. Schneider had prepared a marked up copy of the RFP with extensive proposed edits. The document was displayed and the BRP went through the edits one by one. Dr. Ferguson asked Don Bischoff to redraft the RFP including all edits discussed and agreed to by the Panel.

Dr. Ferguson asked for a discussion to determine to whom we would send a copy of the RFP. It was agreed that we would post the RFP on the BRP WEB site and send it to most of the list of attendees from the two public meetings (leaving off those not eligible to bid such as government employees). It was also agreed that we should send it to some of the Highway Safety organizations such as AAAM, who in turn would be asked to disseminate it to their membership.

Danius suggested that we may want to wait to issue the RFP until more data is available. He offered that he had done his own analyses of the NASS data and that when attempting to break down the results for particular classes of occupants or vehicles that there was very little data in the individual cells. Others noted that while it is recognized that the data is sparse when broken down, that it was time to at least make preliminary estimates of the efficacy of the recent changes to 208 since that was what the BRP was charged with doing. It was agreed to move forward on the time schedule noted below.

There was a discussion of who was eligible to bid on the RFP, with a specific discussion of whether BRP members were eligible. It was decided that the BRP members were ineligible but that affiliates of the BRP members were ok. In clarification of this point, it was noted that while Dr. Schneider and his group at HSRI would be ineligible, it would not preclude other groups in HSRI or at the University of Michigan from bidding. In subsequent discussion it was agreed that if BRP members wanted to bid they would be excluded from the decision making process.

Dr. Ferguson asked for a discussion of the timing for the RFP. It was agreed to issue the RFP at the end of March, 2005 with a 60 day turnaround time specified. It was further agreed that the BRP would meet in Washington D.C following receipt of the proposals (at a date to be specified later) to review the proposals and prepare recommendations to the Alliance for contract(s) award.

Dr. Ferguson asked whether we needed a formal set of evaluation criteria for use when selecting the winning proposal(s). The consensus seemed to be that it would make the process more objective and transparent if we had a formal list of evaluative criteria. Dr. Ferguson asked Chip Chidester to prepare and circulate a proposed list of evaluation criteria.

There was a discussion of whether the proposal itself or the announcement should contain an indication of the maximum funding available. There were arguments on both sides but the consensus was that specification of the available funding generally led to all or most proposals coming in at the maximum available amount. It was therefore decided not to specify the available funding.

Dr. Ferguson asked for a discussion of whether the BRP wanted to host a third public meeting in this calendar year. She said that she was not aware of any new analyses coming out other than the NHTSA analysis currently being conducted at NCSA. Dr. Ferguson asked Dr. Carra when NHTSA was expecting to publish this new analysis. Dr. Carra said that it was not currently possible to estimate a publication date. It was agreed to not hold the next public meeting until April, 2006. It was further agreed that the Panel would need to meet in February, 2006 to review the Draft Final Report from the analysis contract and to plan for the public meeting in April, 2006, should that make sense.

Dr. Ferguson asked whether there is a continuing role for the BRP in the future, as the initial four year period for the study is coming to a close. The ensuing discussion seemed to show a consensus for a continuing role for the BRP since the Alliance had extended its commitment for funding of data collection and the Panel had just embarked on its initial external effort to further analyze the data collected to date. Dr. Ferguson concluded that she sees a role for the Panel for the next year and a decision can be made at that point as to whether still further activity is warranted.

Dr. Ferguson entertained a motion for adjournment. It was so moved and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.