

Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee

March 22, 2013

Present: Frederick Lopez, Pradeep Sharma, Haluk Ogmen, Michael Harold, Michael Zvolensky, Jack Fletcher, Robert Palmer, Randall Lee, Stuart Dryer, Alan Burns, Vincent Tam, Luis Torres, George Zouridakis, Abdelhak Bensaoula, Alan Jacobson, and Stuart Long; ex officio members: Roth Bose, Anne Sherman, Mark Clarke, Selestia Hodge, Brooke Gowl, Maribel Salazar, Ashley Merwin, Christie Peters, Patrick Bordnick, and Cris Milligan. Special visitors: Steve Wallace, current President of the Faculty Senate, and Maria Elena Soliño, President Elect of the Faculty Senate

Absent: Matt Johnson, Wynne Chin, Karl Titz, Alessandro Carrera, Gemunu Gunaratne, and Dmitri Litvinov.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Chair Report: Dr. Lee welcomed everyone.

Review and approval of minutes from 2/15/2013 meeting: Dr. Lee asked for any changes or additions. Dr. Lee asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Dr. Palmer made the motion to accept the minutes, and Dr. Zouridakis seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Report by VP/VC Bose: Dr. Bose addressed the following items:

- Good news! UH had a site visit from AAALAC, the accrediting body for the use of animals, and we received the status of “most improved operation”. The last visit was three years ago, and there were many issues that now have been resolved. There are still a few minor issues in individuals’ labs, but not in the central facility.
- More good news! The State Auditor’s Office completed the required OMB Circular A-133 audit at UH. As a note there were no major findings for UH for the Research cluster, but there were findings in other units at UH. Dr. Bose thanked all of his directors who put in many hours of time for this audit.
- Last month, Dr. Bose attended the Texas House of Representatives and provided testimony, which was well received. The Provost of Rice University also gave testimony and mentioned UH three times regarding our progress.
- Regarding sequestration, Federal agencies have issued guidance letters, and we have placed those letters on the DOR website. Dr. Bose’s advice is to make sure that the faculty are spending the funds that they have and to obtain a no cost extension if needed from their program. He also indicated that technical reports should be filed on time and that DOR would be there to help faculty, if help is needed. He encourages all faculty to continue submitting proposals.

Subcommittee Reports

Resources and Core Facilities: Tam, Lee, Harold, Fletcher, Burns

- Funding for core facilities is on hold. Both Dr. Bose and Dr. Lee expressed concern about the overall process. Dr. Bose indicated that several of the PIs had approached him about their proposals, as if the proposals were going to be funded. Dr. Bose explained to them that the process is still on-going. Dr. Bose also explained that we must do due diligence in the selection of what is funded. He has not seen the proposals and will rely on this subcommittee to send forward the best proposals. He does expect a clean process and external reviews.

Dr. Tam indicated that in its communication with the investigators the subcommittee has not said that the proposals would be funded.

Dr. Bose also discussed the fact that the MRI process was a separate process from the core facility process. He then described that during the last solicitation, one of the faculty chosen had to back out and at that time, there were no previously selected alternates. For the next MRI selection process, there will be ranked alternates, and PI's will be given a certain number of days in which they have to commit to submitting the proposal.

Tam reported that Cris Milligan is assisting the Core Facilities subcommittee in sending out the four proposals for external review.

- Major Instrumentation/Core Facility Task Force: Clarke, Dryer, Lee, Litvinov, Milligan, Porter, Zouridakis

Dr. Lee reported that NSM's inventory had been completed, and Dr. Zouridakis indicated that there was some hesitance from his college.

Centers and Institutes: Fletcher, Jacobson, Ogmen, Zouridakis, Palmer, Milligan, and Salazar. Dr. Fletcher, subcommittee chair, reported that the subcommittee is attempting to get the provisions of the two MAPPs (academic and research) in line. He asks that the RSC review the spreadsheet for any errors and to send any comments to him regarding the MAPPs. Dr. Lee has sent some comments/changes forward.

There is one new application for the creation of a new center for the Center for Nuclear Receptors and Cell Signaling (CNRCS). This application will be reviewed by the subcommittee.

Consortium Policy. Draft guidelines will be sent to the RSC for review and comment. Comments should be sent within 2 weeks. Once comments are received, Beverly Rymer will finalize for the DOR website.

Research Excellence Awards: Dryer, Long, Lopez, Ogmen, Chin, and Zouridakis. Dr. Lee thanked the subcommittee that sent the recommendations forward to Dr. Bose. Winners were announced and will be presented with an \$8,000 award and a trophy at the faculty awards dinner on April 24, 2013.

GEAR Program: Subcommittee members are: Litvinov, Burns, Gunaratne, Lopez, Sharma, and Zouridakis. Ranked proposals were received from the Deans, and the subcommittee will begin its work to make recommendations to the Vice President.

New Faculty/Small Grants Program: Bensaoula, Carrera, Ogmen, Titz, and Torres. Awards have been set up. The subcommittee has met and is working on some changes to the New Faculty Award program. These will be distributed to the RSC before the next meeting.

Update RSC Bylaws: Anne Sherman reported that the draft by-laws have been sent to the RSC and has requested comments. Dr. Harold posed a question about whether Assistant and Associate Professors can be members of the RSC and the answer is yes they can under the current by-laws. The by-laws will need to be approved by the RSC and by the Faculty Governance Committee, as indicated by Dr. Clarke.

IDC Distribution Task Force: An initial meeting has been held and the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 29.

Conflict of Interest and Compliance: No report, business as usual.

Intellectual Property Committee: No report, business as usual.

Old Business:

Sequestration: Covered under Dr. Bose's remarks.

Tuition Waiver Policy: Beverly Rymer was not in attendance, and Dr. Lee requests that she give a final update. Please send any comments to Dr. Zouridakis for follow-up.

Human Subjects: No update.

Book Subvention: Dr. Clarke reported that this new award should be available to all colleges and should be communicated to all colleges.

Expectations of Scholarship and Extramural Funding for New Hires: No report.

Vacation and Sick Leave Policy for personnel supported by grants:

Jack Fletcher and Randy Lee have generated a conceptual policy to encumber/expense leave time each pay period as a fringe benefit. The corresponding funds would go into a pool that would be accessed when an employee terminates. Specifically, the policy drafted is the following:

Assuming a person is paid 1.00 from a grant:

- 1. Vacation and sick days encumber on the grant to the earnings end date.*
- 2. During a pay run, vacation and sick days disencumber and expense on the grant in an amount appropriate for the pay period.*
- 3. If a person takes a vacation day or a sick day, the salary still expenses to that grant for the vacation day or sick day.*
- 4. When the person's employment terminates, any unused vacation balance is charged to the vacation/sick day pool.*

Apparently, UT Austin uses this approach and charges 1.10% as fringe benefits, which are deposited into a UTA pool account. When an employee leaves and has a leave balance, the corresponding funds are extracted from that account. We have forwarded this concept to Dr. Carlucci, who has agreed to consider it for implementation. We expect to hear back from him before any formal recommendation is made.

New Business:

Balance between strict safety regulations and ability to conduct research: There is still no Director, and it was reported that the office is being reorganized.

Request from Dana Rooks, Dean of the Library: Dr. Rooks wants to address the RSC about the fact that Librarians are not on the pre-approved list of individuals that can be PIs. She will come to a future meeting.

IRB and IACUC forms on the web need work: Dr. Dryer brought up the fact that there are problems with the forms, and Maribel Salazar will look into it.

InfoEd PI Portal: Dr. Clarke reported that he had a demonstration of the InfoEd IP module and that the portal is intuitive and helpful. There will be a presentation at the May Retreat regarding the new software implementations.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Palmer, which was seconded by Dr. Tam. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Friday, April 19, 2013, same location from 1:30-3:00 p.m.