

Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee:

December 14, 2012

Present: Frederick Lopez, Haluk Ogmen, Michael Harold, Karl Titz, Alessandro Carrera, Jack Fletcher, Gemunu Gunaratne, Randall Lee, Stuart Dryer, Alan Burns, Vincent Tam, Luis Torres, George Zouridakis, Abdelhak Bensaoula, Allan Jacobson, Dmitri Litvinov; ex officio members: Roth Bose, Anne Sherman, Brooke Gowl, Maribel Salazar, and Cris Milligan.

Absent: Matt Johnson, Wynne Chin, Pradeep Sharma, Michael Zvolensky, Robert Palmer, and Stuart Long.

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

Chair Report: Dr. Lee welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the RSC for 2012.

Review and approval of minutes from 11/16/2012 meeting: Dr. Lee asked for any changes and Cris Milligan indicates that she was not in attendance at the November meeting. The minutes will be corrected to reflect that. Dr. Zouridakis made a motion to approve the minutes, and Dr. Torres seconded. The motion carried.

Report by VP/VC Bose: Dr. Bose welcomed everyone and gave his good wishes that everyone have a happy and safe winter break. The RSC has accomplished substantial work this semester, and he enjoys the support that they give to the Division of Research. Dr. Bose addressed the following items:

- Sequestration planning (from New Business on the Agenda)—UH is waiting to see what happens with the Federal government and how that will affect new funding and our current grants. Both NSF and NIH have issued guidance on budget cuts in the range of 10-15%. As a result of these potential cuts, Dr. Bose is trying to identify funds to cover post-docs and students to sustain us through these issues.
- Core Facilities proposals. Dr. Bose expressed his concern about the subcommittee requesting revisions to these proposals. This is not part of a normal process to choose the best proposals to fund. He wants the subcommittee to ensure that everything is transparent. He reiterated that to have a strong partnership, we must work together.
- New Grant Celebration. Dr. Bose announced that he plans to hold a celebration in January for all faculty who received grants during the past few months. He hopes that members of the RSC will attend that celebration.

Subcommittee Reports

Resources and Core Facilities:

- Dr. Fletcher asked what is the authority of the subcommittee and explained that the reason revisions were requested was that the subcommittee was concerned about what outside reviewers would think. Dr. Fletcher expressed his thought that the subcommittee should have the ability to reject some of the proposals. A discussion ensued. Dr. Ogmen indicated that the review process was changed to require external reviews. Dr. Fletcher pointed out that this was not part of the guidelines that were issued for this program, and there should be some flexibility there.
- Dr. Bose recommended that the subcommittee assess the revised proposals and recommend which should be sent out for review. This approach would make the process similar to a two-tier review process, which some sponsors utilize.
- Dr. Fletcher made a motion that the subcommittee go forward with proposals that are worthy and meet the current guidelines. Dr. Dryer seconded, and the motion carried.
- Major Instrumentation Inventory. Dr. Lee indicated that some faculty in NSM misunderstood what was being requested, and were thus hesitant to provide information regarding the equipment in their labs. So, there has been little progress. Dr. Bose indicated that the core facility program will hopefully change the culture. All agreed that it would be good to have a listing of research equipment on the DOR website. Dr. Jacobson also said that we need a list of service centers, and that would be a good start. Cris Milligan said that she will generate this list.

- IDC Distribution. Representatives are being assigned to this task force, and Dr. Bose asked for 2 RSC members to serve on it. Dr. Tam and Dr. Fletcher volunteered.
- FCOI Committee. Dr. Palmer had agreed to serve on the FCOI committee representing the RSC/Faculty Senate.

Subcommittee Reports:

Centers and Institutes: Subcommittee members are: Fletcher, Jacobson, Ogmen, Zouridakis, Palmer, Milligan, and Salazar. Dr. Fletcher, subcommittee chair, gave a report (attached) indicating that there are documents that need to be reviewed by all of the RSC. We will send those documents. Dr. Fletcher also questioned if “cluster” language was still current. Instead, perhaps we need to have College, Department, and University structures. Cris Milligan has prepared a draft of the new Center/Institute guidelines, which will be sent out to the RSC and hopes to have all comments back by the end of January.

Dr. Fletcher also reviewed the request from TOSI to be a center. The report is attached. It is clearly a college-level institute, but their economic plan is not viable. The RSC approved the report, which is attached to these minutes, and it will be sent forward to Dr. Bose.

GEAR Program: Subcommittee members are: Burns, Gunaratne, Lopez, Sharma, and Zouridakis. Drs. Tam, Dryer, and Harold also volunteered for this committee. The selection process was discussed. Anne Sherman will send a report to all that provides the number awarded to each college last year. There was a motion by Dr. Zouridakis to retain the same process as last year, and this was seconded by Dr. Tam. The motion carried.

New Faculty/Small Grants Program: Subcommittee members are: Bensaoula, Carrera, Ogmen, Titz, and Torres. Dr. Titz reported that the subcommittee met and made decisions to fund all of the small grants, except those who also applied to the New Faculty program. For the New Faculty Program, the selection process was modified to exclude any new faculty that had received more than \$50k start-up funding. All agreed that the subcommittee should continue to meet to discuss the start-up package matter and to develop a rubric for decisions on these two programs. All RSC members agreed by vote, except for one person.

Update RSC Bylaws: Anne Sherman reported that she, Dr. Torres and Dr. Zouridakis had worked on the bylaws and would meet again to finalize and bring to the RSC at the January meeting.

Conflict of Interest and Compliance: Dr. Palmer has a timing issue with the meetings and cannot serve on this committee. Dr. Gemunu Gunaratne volunteered to replace him.

Intellectual Property Committee: Dr. Dryer reported that he had attended one meeting and considered one new disclosure.

Old Business:

Tuition Waiver Policy: Update Pending.

New Business:

Balance between strict safety regulations and ability to conduct research: All agreed to invite the new EHS Director (once appointed) to a future RSC meeting at the November RSC meeting; however this person is still not hired. Dr. Bose indicated that he would address this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Friday, January 18, 2013, same location from 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Center Committee Report
Research and Scholarship Committee
December 14, 2012

1. The Committee submits for approval the attached review of the College of Optometry Center, The Ocular Surface Institute
2. The Center Committee has developed guidelines for terminating Research Organizations, which are attached
3. The Center Committee has recommended revisions in the Policy Guidelines for Research Organizations. These revisions stem from the ongoing review process. In brief, we recommend eliminating cluster language, defining clearly the type of center according to the reporting structure (University, College, Departmental) and more clearly defining the nature of a DOR RO (which may be a center, institute, or core facility) eligible for direct IDC sharing.
4. The committee is working on a revision and clarification of the reporting procedures that incorporates potentially revised definitions and clarifies the role of DOR and the RSC. Specifically, reviews should occur according to the reporting structure. The RSC should review new applications for ROs, but ongoing evaluations by the RSC should be restricted to ROs with a reporting structure involving DOR. Reviews of departmental and college level centers involved in what would loosely be called "scientific" research should occur at the departmental or college level and reported to DOR. An organization engaged in what is broadly defined as "scholarly" or "creative" research would not submit a report to DOR, although DOR would maintain a list of approved ROs. The RSC will define the type of center on initial review. The DOR does not provide salary lines for any RO, but may provide start up support and other forms of support. On review, a RO may be approved for a full 5 years, recommended for termination, or given a one-year probationary period. A Yearly annual report is required. Renewals will occur every five years on a staggered basis. A new center must submit a request for renewal after two years.

Respectfully Submitted
Jack M. Fletcher
Chair

Research Center and Institute Evaluation
Research Council Subcommittee Report
December, 2012

Center: The Ocular Surface Institute (TOSI)

Synopsis

TOSI is a proposed new institute from faculty and the administration of the College of Optometry. The goals are to (1) advance ocular science and health by accelerating the development of translational research and discoveries involving ocular health into practical applications; and (2) enhance the research capabilities of the College of Optometry's ocular surface research environment by building a productive interdisciplinary team. The focus will be on four core areas: (1) Ocular surface biology; (2) Visual optics/imaging; (3) Clinical sciences; and (4) Discovery and development. Although the institute has a college level reporting structure, funds are requested from the DOR to hire new faculty, purchase equipment, and redesign space.

Strengths

- Strong faculty with an established track record of grant and industry support
- Clear administrative support with contributions for faculty hiring from the College
- Dedicated space within the new research space controlled by the College
- Management plan that is clear on issues related to the internal organizational structure and relations within the College

Weaknesses

- There may be existing resources to support the institute, as well as existing grants and contracts that would provide the basis for the institute's research program. However, these are not explicitly cited or integrated. Relatedly, there is no discussion of issues related to credit splits with the College and sharing of IDC by the Institute and the College. Identifying resources hidden in biographical sketches is not adequate for these purposes.
- The existing center involving ocular sciences within the College is mentioned as supportive, but there is no effort to integrate the two centers. Given the purposes of the center program, this seems shortsighted and a potentially missed opportunity. If it is industry-oriented, the existing center would seem to represent a vital component of even a college level center given its stated orientation to translational science.
- There are many minor weaknesses identified in the previous review that are minimally addressed in what seems to be a minimally revised proposal. In particular, exactly how the University would gain recover costs through increased IDC is not clear, nor is it clear how the institute would be self-supporting given that the basis is increased IDC.

Recommendation

With some revision, the TOSI is recommended as a college level institute, but the relations with the existing departmental structure need to be more explicit and more consideration of the existing center is recommended.

Note: A center, especially one with a reporting structure that involves DOR, typically involves multiple departments and colleges, and/or relations with outside universities that are substantive and promote the mission of the University. This proposal does not make explicit relations with the departmental structure within the College and has no connections outside the College other than some advisory functions. There is a plan to involve other departments at UH, but no indication of support or interest from these departments and the cited investigators. There is no explicit plan for integrating additional departments and investigators into the Institute. The management plan is not structured in ways that are obviously conducive to a broader institute because it is centered narrowly and vaguely on the research program of the three principals.