Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee: March 23, 2012

Present: Matthew Johnson, Wynn Chin, Frederick Lopez, Haluk Ogmen, Stowe Shoemaker, Chinhui Juhn, James Garson, Robert Palmer, Janok Bhattacharya, Randall Lee, Gemunu Gunaratne, Alan Burns, Vincent Tam, Ray Cline, Abdelhak Bensaoula, Coleen Carlson, Rathindra Bose, Anne Sherman and Selesta Hodge.

Absent: Pradeep Sharma, Michael Harold, Jack Fletcher, Stuart Long, and Dmitri Litvinov.

Guests: Brooke Gowl and Maribel Salazar.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Report: Dr. Bhattacharya reported that there was a quorum present.   The Chair attended a meeting of the UCC and there are several policies that need to be brought to the RSC attention. He will send these to the members.

Review and approval of minutes from February 17, 2012 meeting. Dr. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the January minutes and Dr. Chin seconded. The motion carried.

Dr. Bose Report: Dr. Bose reported that DOR is very busy.

1. There are a number of changes coming from the federal government. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is looking at revisions to OMB Circular A-21.   In particular, the Financial Conflict of Interest Policy recently handed down by the Public Health Service, which provides funding through NIH, is going through the UCC and must be finalized here at UH by August 24, 2012. For our next meeting, Dr. Bose will present a roadmap or plan on how we are going to make that deadline.

2. Animal Care requires significant funding and good management of those funds. The next AALAC audit/visit will be in June, 2012 and we expect a good report because of the changes that have been made since the last visit.

3. Regarding Centers/Institutes, there needs to be a clear distinction between DOR/University Centers and College Centers, how funding is provided and how the centers are managed. Currently, we have one DOR center that has a serious audit report, with violations. We are drafting our official response to the auditors. Accountability is very important and Dr. Bose wants a clear policy.

Core Facilities: Dr. Lee handed out the RFP and wants feedback on the document. He added a section on who is eligible for the program. For this fiscal year, commitments have already been made; this RFP is for the coming years. He anticipates that there will be one solicitation per year with awards being made by December 1, 2012. The timeline was selected to coordinate with the NSF MRI limited submission deadlines. There is also a description of minor core facility awards. For the minor opportunity, Dr. Bose wants a 20% match from the department/colleges.   This will be negotiated with Dr. Bose. Regarding timing, the RFP will be sent out soon with a vote and release in April. Dr. Bose recognized the work that Dr. Lee and the others had done on this RFP and thanked them.

Centers and Institutes: Jack Fletcher, Stowe Shoemaker, Haluk Ogmen, Brooke Gowl, and Cris Milligan. Dr. Bose reported that he wants a strong policy for reviewing centers and institutes. Twelve centers report to DOR and he has selected 3 for review; 1 impacts the entire university; 1 impacts only colleges; and one impacts only the PI. He is looking for guidance on closing centers. Dr. Bose will send information about the three centers to this subcommittee.

There was a short discussion of responsibilities. The RSC and Dr. Bose should be able to create and close a center/institute. The RSC Chair would keep the President of the Faculty Senate informed. Dr. Garson suggested that the timing for closing should be on a case by case basis.

Tuition Support for Graduate Students: The subcommittee has recommended to Dr. Bose that tuition should be put on all grants and, when awarded, the PI will be provided an equivalent amount that he/she can use on hiring non-grant supported students. There will be a stipulation that this will be considered uncommitted cost sharing and that it must be used during the life of the grant for tuition. There was a brief discussion on this and a motion was made and seconded by Dr. Garson and Dr. Gunaratne, respectively, and tabled so that Dr. Lee could present the formal written motion either before the next meeting or at the next meeting.   Dr. Bose indicated that he is working with the Provost and hopes to have his concurrence soon.

Internal Awards: Dr. Tam, chair of the subcommittee on Research Excellence Awards announced that we have received 17 nominations for the three categories and that we would meet on March 26 to make the final decisions, which will be forwarded to the Chair of the RSC and to Dr. Bose for consideration.   The Faculty Excellence dinner where these individuals will be recognized is April 26.

Dr. Garson reported that the Deans are sending their selections for the GEAR by March 30 and the subcommittee will be on April 19. Awards will be announced April 30, 2012.

New Business: Dr. Cline announced that the Texas Workforce Commission will make an award to UH for the Governor's Science and Technology Champions' Academy.   University of Houston, College of Technology will provide a five day long, residential summer camp during June 2012. The theme of the summer camp will be "Science and Technology in the Exploration of Extreme Environments." The content of the summer camp will cover the use of science and technology in extreme environments ranging from space exploration to ultra deep water oil and gas exploration, development and operation. The unifying theme across these extremes will be the use of robotics.   The RSC congratulated the College of Technology.

Dr. Bhattacharya reminded everyone that Dr. Bose is hiring a new Associate or Assistant Vice President for Research. Dr. Bhattacharya is chairing the search committee.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Lee and seconded by Dr. Cline. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

UH Division of Research Core Facilities Proposal Guidelines

The Division of Research (DOR) anticipates significant funding to develop new Core Facilities and enhance existing Core Facilities to advance the research infrastructure at UH. Core Facilities are defined as major research instrumentation, laboratories, or facilities that will be used by a broad group of researchers within and outside UH. Guidelines for the preparation of proposals are given below.

Deadlines and Dates: Proposals must be submitted to the DOR on or before October 1 on an annual basis. The DOR anticipates funding approximately three proposals each year. Proposals selected for funding will be announced no later than December 1.

Eligibility: Faculty members at the University of Houston who are requesting funds for major Core Facilities (defined as ≥ $400K) are eligible to submit a proposal. If selected for funding, the proposal must be augmented and submitted to the NSF-MRI program by the fourth week of January in the following year (i.e., ~7 weeks after being selected); otherwise, the proposal will be defunded.

Minor Core Facilities: Researchers seeking Core Facility support of less than $400K may request these funds directly from the Vice President for Research (VPR) on a case-by-case basis. In these situations, all infrastructure and/or instrumentation costs must be documented, and evidence of substantial multi-user need must be established. Further, the VPR will expect a written commitment for matching funds of 20% from the proposer, department, and/or college.

____1. **Cover Sheet**

The project title should be concise and convey the goal of the proposal. Applications must identify only a single PI and up to four co-PIs. Other major participants may be indicated as "Senior Personnel".

____2. **Project Description** (maximum length: 10 pages, including all figures and charts)

A. Instrument/Facility Type and Location

Broadly describe the nature of the proposed instrumentation and/or facility, and specify the physical address where it will be located (i.e., provide the building name and room number).

B. Research Activities To Be Enabled (suggested maximum length: 4 pages)

Describe the research and training activities and projects that will be enabled by the desired instrumentation and/or facility. Include brief summary details of existing support for these activities and projects (e.g., external and/or internal funding). In narrative or tabular form, describe the personnel by research area, number, and type (e.g., senior personnel, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, undergraduate students). Include only those who will most actively use the instrumentation for research and training on a regular basis. Other more minor users of the instrument, when applicable, should be described in a more condensed format.

C. Description of Instrumentation or Facility and Needs (suggested max length: 2 pages)

Provide a technical description of the requested instrumentation and/or facility, including manufacturer and model number where appropriate. Clearly explain why the requested equipment or facility is needed. The existence and availability of comparable instrumentation or facilities in close geographical proximity should be outlined in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources – see Section 6 below.

D. Impact on Research and Training Infrastructure (suggested maximum length: 2 pages)

Describe how the instrument or facility will serve to attract researchers and make a substantial advancement in UH's ability to conduct cutting-edge research. Describe how the instrument or facility will enhance the quality of student education, research, and training.

E. Management Plan (suggested maximum length: 2 pages)

Investigators must provide detailed business and management plans with information on space, technical staffing for operations and maintenance, training of users, access for external users, and sources of funding (e.g., funds generated by user fees) and plans for long-term operations and maintenance. Describe the following: 1) renovations and/or infrastructure needed to accommodate the instrument/facility; 2) specific details of the oversight, operation, and maintenance of the instrument/facility (both initially and long-term); 3) anticipated costs and the technical expertise needed to operate and maintain the instrument/facility; 4) if the expertise is currently unavailable, describe how it will be obtained; 5) procedures for allocating user access, if appropriate; and 6) plans for attracting and supporting new users. Include information on anticipated usage and downtime. Sufficient detail should be given to enable reviewers to evaluate whether the project includes appropriate technical expertise and infrastructure to allow effective use of the instrument and/or facility as well as facilitate multi-user accessibility.

___3. **Biographical Sketches**

Include two-page biographical sketches of the PI and any Co-PI(s) (i.e., those personnel listed on the cover sheet) as well as any designated Senior Personnel who will be major users of the relevant research instrumentation. If applicable, also provide a biographical sketch of the individuals responsible for the management and maintenance of the instrument. The format for the biographical sketches should be NSF style.

___4. **Budget and Budget Justification**

Provide yearly and cumulative budget pages. The budget justification, which must not exceed three pages, should itemize and clearly describe all eligible project costs. All budget items must be justified and commensurate with the scale and sophistication of the instrumentation/facility.

___5. **Current and Pending Support**.

Provide a listing for the PI and Co-PIs (i.e., those listed on the cover sheet) as well as designated Senior Personnel.

___6. **Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources**

Provide a listing of similar and/or related instrumentation/facilities at or near UH.

___7. **Supplementary Documents**

Examples include: (a) Itemized vendor quotes are strongly advised for all proposals. Although a proposal might reference and include a quote for a specific make and model, the proposer is reminded that the standard UH procurement processes must be utilized to establish the appropriate item(s) to be purchased; (b) Statements from individuals, on institutional letterhead, confirming substantive collaboration efforts and/or usage of the instrument.

___8. **Core Facility Designation**

Please check whether the facility is best characterized as (a) University-wide, (b) College-based, or (c) Department-based. As an example, the NMR Core Facility managed by the Department of Chemistry has regular users from Chemistry, other departments in NSM, other colleges on campus, and outside the campus. As such, the best characterization is "University-wide."

☐ University-wide   ☐ College-based   ☐ Department-based