

**Present:** Jack Fletcher, Alan Burns, Wynne Chin, Allan Jacobson, Randy Lee, Stuart Long, Clayton Neighbors, Ezemenari Obasi, Christie Peters, Gregg Roman, Luis Torres, Maria Bondesson, Mary Ann Ottinger, Mark Clarke, Cris Milligan, Beverly Rymer, Courtney Donica, Ashley Merwin, Rozlyn Reep

**Absent:** George Zouridakis, Richard Bond, Alessandro Carrera, Stuart Dryer, Gregory Marinic, Jay Neal, Robert Palmer, Shin-Shem Steven Pei, Pradeep Sharma, Gangbing Song, Michael Zvolensky, Maria Solino, Roth Bose

Welcome by the Chair: Chair Dr. Fletcher welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM.

Approval of November Minutes: Dr. Fletcher asked members to review the minutes and if there were any edits. Dr. Roman made a motion to accept the minutes and Dr. Long seconded. The minutes were approved.

Status Update by VP/VC Dr. Bose: Dr. Bose was unable to attend the meeting and provided Dr. Fletcher with a written report to be read to the committee. Dr. Fletcher asked Dr. Ottinger to read the report:

**Dear Colleagues,**

**First, I want to convey my heartfelt holiday greetings to you all. I hope you find time from your busy schedule to spend time with your family and loved ones. I would like to brief you on two important items listed below:**

**1. A-81 implementation: As you are aware, DOR staff has been working hard for a year to implement A-81 circular by December 26, 2014. I am pleased to say that we have all major checks and balances in place to comply with the OMB A-81 circular. In this regard, I have appointed a special task force chaired by Mr. Tom Ehardt, Associate Vice Chancellor and Associate Vice President for Finance, with representatives from the Office of the Provost, the Division of Administration and Finance, the Division of Research, University Information Technology, Human Resources, the Internal Auditing Department and the Faculty Senate's Research and Scholarship Committee. The committee has done an excellent job identifying specific issues which needed to be addressed and making appropriate adjustments in our operating procedures. A separate communiqué has already been sent out from the Controller's office regarding these adjustments. I am truly grateful to the task force membership for their incisive and dedicated work. Especially, I'd like to thank Dr. Fletcher for joining the task force and making contributions on behalf of the RSC. Beverly Rymer will be at today's RSC meeting to answer any questions you might have.**

**2. IDC Taskforce Recommendations:** You may have heard that the IDC Taskforce has finalized its recommendations. Again, I'd like to thank every member who worked over the last 18 months to look into a variety of issues, including our return rates to units/colleges and uses of funds at UH, and compared them with many universities across the nation. I am grateful to RSC members who were part of the task force. Also, Dr. Carlucci deserves a great deal of appreciation for collecting and disseminating voluminous information from all colleges. Upon your endorsement, I am willing to accept the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Roth

Subcommittee Reports:

**New Faculty/Small Grants:** Dr. Fletcher expressed appreciation to Dr. Obasi and his subcommittee for reviewing 64 proposals and asked Dr. Obasi to give a report.

Dr. Obasi reported that his subcommittee worked diligently for the short period of time that was required. Thirty Small Grants were recommended for funding, but two applicants were ineligible. Dr. Obasi reported that 26 New Faculty awards were also recommended by the subcommittee. He stated that his subcommittee will provide process recommendations in the spring – one being an earlier announcement for the Small Grants/New Faculty awards. He ended his report by thanking Rozlyn Reep for her help during the review process.

Dr. Clarke asked why two applicants were ineligible for Small Grants. Dr. Obasi said the applicants had received SGP funds the year before and were ineligible due to the new 5 year rule. He believed the applicants simply did not read the guidelines. Dr. Fletcher said the Associate Dean for CLASS will be bringing up the 5 year rule issue, and he should feel free to raise any issues for next year's competition.

Everyone was in favor of the subcommittee's recommendations for funding.

**Centers & Institutes:** Dr. Zouridakis was unable to attend the meeting due to commencement, so Dr. Fletcher provided the update. He reported that they are working on cluster definitions and waiting for a list of centers from Dr. Ottinger that need to be reviewed.

**Resources & Core Facilities:** Dr. Burns stated that at the last meeting he promised to circulate a publication containing a survey applicable to core facilities. He will use the publication as a basis for conversation with his group in January. They will work on a draft of expectations. Dr. Burns said a key point in the survey was that most core facilities get considerable funds from their universities. He will keep that

in mind when developing recommendations for Dr. Bose. Dr. Burns also reported that the Core Facilities RFP was released.

**Excellence:** Dr. Neighbors informed the committee that the announcement for the Excellence awards was released a couple of days late due to changes to the guidelines – he had received a lot of comments regarding the changes. His subcommittee is now waiting for nominations.

**GEAR:** Dr. Roman told the committee the announcement for GEAR went out December 5<sup>th</sup>. There was a discussion about the allocation of GEAR proposals for colleges, but there wasn't much relative difference in research expenditures from last year. The subcommittee decided to keep the same number of slots.

**ACO User Advisory Committee:** There was no update. The committee will meet again in February

**Conflict of Interest:** Dr. Burns said they are finishing up the year end with memos and continue to have discussions about what constitutes as “conflict of interest.” It's a well-managed group and they have good people working.

**Intellectual Property:** Dr. Palmer was not able to attend the meeting, so Dr. Fletcher provided a report. He stated the faculty governance committee modified its bylaws for the IP Committee which now prohibits any participation by ex-officio - so the RSC has no representatives on the committee. Dr. Fletcher asked the faculty governance committee if it was their intention to exclude the RSC. They indicated it was not their intention, and they will reconsider the bylaws at their next meeting.

#### New Business:

**Publication Charges:** Dr. Roman reported that Dr. George Fox, Professor in Biology & Biochemistry had approached the Library Committee – he had been dealing with processing charges and open access journal charges. For journals that are open access, the authors get charged. This will become an issue if researchers have to pay charges from grants because publication charges often occur after the grant has ended. A number of places have tried to address this issue and some new mechanisms have been developed to help faculty cover these charges. Berkley simply pays for those who cannot afford the charges. Biomed Central has a mechanism which allows members to get a discount; however, that raises the question of “have we maximized our advantage of joining these groups?” Dr. Fox asked that we take a closer look at this situation.

Dr. Burns asked if these items are included in the budget with NIH grants. Dr. Roman replied yes, but it only works if you publish what you budgeted for and during the life of the grant. It doesn't provide flexibility. You can budget, but it's not a failsafe. Right now, he thinks faculty goes to their departments.

Dr. Lee stated that Congress is forcing faculty to do open access, so that their materials and documents can be viewed.

Dr. Burns said it sounds like this issue would need to be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Dr. Roman told the committee that Emory and Oak Fund have a pool of money dedicated to open access charges, etc.

Ms. Peters stated that Dr. Fox and several others have come to the library requesting that the library pay certain charges. The Library feels it should be at the college level. She told the committee she would be happy to be a part of the subcommittee for this issue if it formulates. Ms. Peters also thinks there's a misconception that for the journals they have they get discounts. She asked Dr. Roman to send her the information and she'll look into it.

Dr. Obasi asked if it's an allowable cost on IDC and Dr. Fletcher replied yes. Dr. Obasi then asked if a college has some way of investing its IDC within that college. Dr. Fletcher said there's currently no formal policy for IDC distribution within a department to an investigator. Some departments share IDC with the PI and it's something faculty can negotiate.

Dr. Lee said that he is an editor for the American Chemical Society and that ACS was never open access. Because of recent laws, open access must be provided if you're publishing results. He feels that publishing and access charges are certainly something the RSC should look into.

Dr. Burns asked if you can simply budget for more with grants. Dr. Lee replied yes, but there's an issue with the grant expiring. Ms. Beverly Rymer said that with the A81, you have 90 days after a grant has expired. Both Drs. Roman and Lee felt that wasn't much time.

Dr. Fletcher told the committee they had a great discussion and he feels it's a problem the RSC should address. He would like to form a committee so the RSC can address this issue. Dr. Chin stated that in the Business College there have been issues. It's not just simply a DOR issue – it's a general academic issue.

Dr. Fletcher said he would like to propose a subcommittee and will mention it to the Executive Committee. Dr. Roman will Chair and Ms. Peters will serve on the subcommittee, along with Dr. Fox.

**Provost's Memo on Tuition Charges to Grants:** Dr. Fletcher provided handouts of the Provost's memo. He read to the committee the following excerpt: "In the spirit of the Research and Scholarship Committee recommendation...." He then went over the RSC recommendation from the April 2012 meeting minutes, as follows:

**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 by Dr. Garson and seconded by Dr. Gunaratne. Below is the motion that was passed:

**The motion is to recommend to Dr. Bose that graduate student tuition be budgeted on all proposals submitted by the University of Houston to all outside sponsors are to utilize and support graduate students, as long as this budget item is allowable by the sponsor. In return for charging graduate student tuition to grants, Dr. Bose will establish a cost center for each PI who is successful in garnering such outside sponsored funds. The amount of funds deposited in the cost center will be equivalent, on a per-capita basis, to the amount of DSTF funding awarded per graduate student by the PI's respective unit during the time that the grant is active, and will be adjusted annually to reflect any changes in the level of DSFT support. These funds must be used exclusively for graduate student stipends, tuition, and/or fees and must be utilized within the duration of the grant. If there are funds remaining in the cost center after the expiration of the sponsored grant, they will be returned to the Division of Research. In the proposal budgets, these funds will be designated as uncommitted cost sharing for the project. It is acknowledged that these funds are separate from the funds provided under the DSTF program.**

Dr. Fletcher indicated that the recommendation stemmed from a discussion generated from a subcommittee that worked on this issue for a year and came up with this motion. At the time, A21 guidance prohibited masters/doctoral students from being treated differently, which delayed implementation. One concern was the agreement that was worked out seemed different from what the Provost had proposed in the letter. When the original motion passed, funds supporting a student went into a pool to support other students designated by the PI. The goal was to increase the graduate tuition pool.

Dr. Obasi asked if they had thought about the consequence of faculty hiring post docs instead. He was concerned that the effect could be to discourage faculty from placing students on grants. Several committee members responded by indicating that these issues had been discussed in considerable detail and that the motion reflected the best the RSC could make of the situation.

Dr. Fletcher said that according to Dr. Litvinov, if you pay a year you get a year. This was not reflected in the memo and some members said that they understood that if you pay 3 years you get 1 year, which is not what the RSC agreed to.

Dr. Neighbors stated that point #1 in the memo says "all grants". Dr. Fletcher said he does not believe that the memo requires an investigator to put students on grants. Dr. Neighbors said it's not what it sounds like in the memo and would like to see it written down somewhere.

Dr. Long said it looks like if funding doesn't go up, he's going to have 2/3 the amount of students with the same amount of funding. Dr. Obasi asked what the next step would be for the committee since the RSC was implicated in the memo. Dr. Fletcher proposed that they invite Dr. Litvinov in January to explain the tuition plan. Dr. Lee questioned the source of the directive. He said he was on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee at the time and remembers members of the upper level administration saying "we were leaving money on the table." Dr. Chin told the committee that as president of the Faculty Senate, he will address the issue. The RSC can bring in Dr. Litvinov first to explain the plan, and then move from there.

Ms. Beverly Rymer said the problem is that not all students will be treated the same. Dr. Fletcher said that they can't treat master/doctoral students differently according to A81. He said he'd be happy to talk with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In response to member questions, the RSC can always take another vote on the proposed policy since RSC members believe it is different from what was decided in 2012 and the RSC is cited as a source of support. The goal was to make grant paid tuition financially neutral, but that's not what's in the memo. It's not a DOR issue because it is now coming from the Provost and the graduate school.

Ms. Cris Milligan pointed out that point #2 in the memo essentially says "if there's a surplus".

Dr. Roman said that since it's not what the committee voted on in 2012, it sounds like they need to do some fact finding to see how it changed. Dr. Fletcher said he talked with Dr. Litvinov, who said the spirit of this policy is what the RSC voted on. Dr. Fletcher felt the RSC should have been consulted about the memo. Dr. Fletcher invited Dr. Litvinov to come to the RSC meeting in January and encouraged members to talk with their constituents. Dr. Fletcher and Dr. Chin will talk to the Faculty Senate Committee and bring up the issue at the meeting of the Faculty Senate and the administration.

**Policy on Research Misconduct:** Ms. Rymer told the committee an email was sent out regarding the implementation of A81 effective December 26, 2014. One issue is the need to review the research misconduct policy to make sure it is up to date and aligned with the A81 requirements. Dr. Fletcher said they need to have a subcommittee and will ask Dr. Palmer to Chair and Dr. Zvolensky to serve. They will work with Ms. Kirstin Rochford to review the policy and will ask them to report back to the committee.

**Funds for Dry Periods between Grants:** Dr. Fletcher said Dr. Bose wanted to see if bridge funding was an issue for faculty. A lot of universities have support called "bridging funds", which keeps researchers alive between reviews. He asked the committee if they think it would be good to have provisions for dry periods. Dr. Long asked where the funds would come from. Dr. Fletcher asked that it be

recorded in the minutes that the committee thinks it's a good concept; however, they're worried about funding, fairness, and criteria.

### **New Business:**

1. Dr. Ottinger introduced the newest member of her office, Dr. Courtney Donica. Dr. Donica came from MD Anderson and will be working with faculty researchers to help build teams for enhancing grant portfolios.
2. Dr. Roman asked Ms. Milligan about the upcoming blips and outages during holiday break and if there's any deviation in timing. Ms. Milligan said the timing will stay the same and generators will be tested. Everything will begin on December 26 at 5:30 AM and be finished by 9:00 AM. Blips should only be seconds in length. The second set of blips will happen on December 30<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Roman said he hasn't heard anything about a lock down. Ms. Milligan said the only building that will be on lockdown is STL. She also said this process will happen again next winter.
3. Dr. Fletcher said there was a memo regarding A81 that was sent out by Ms. Rymer on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Something to note is that you can't charge a single grant for severance pay. Payment for severance on a grant is no longer allowed. There is now a pool made up of 0.5% fringe to cover vacation leave for employees at the end of a grant.

### Old Business

**Audit Violations:** Information will be distributed at the next meeting.

**DOR Cost Matching:** There was a spreadsheet showing DOR cost matching for NSF MRI proposals. Dr. Fletcher asked Rozlyn to distribute the document to everyone via email. The information goes back to the year 2005. Dr. Fletcher told members that if they have questions or would like additional information, email him.

**Travel:** Dr. Fletcher said he is pleased to report that for travel on external sources, faculty no longer have to provide letters as long as its 100% covered by external sources. Mr. Glisson's email regarding travel and per-diems was provided in the agenda. Dr. Fletcher said it does not address out of pocket costs and will ask Mr. Glisson about it. The question is still pending.

**IDC Report:** Dr. Fletcher and former RSC members served on the IDC Task Force committee. Everything about IDC is on the University's website. A summary of the IDC committee's report follows:

- Based on examination of peer policies and data, they could find no standard or common practice for distribution of IDC.

- A review of the UH data on distribution of UH IDC revealed that there was information available on how UH IDC is used by various units.
- A review of the expenditures confirmed that the uses appeared appropriate for support of research.
- There was limited documentation of criteria available at the unit level on the choices and priorities guiding the specific uses.
- They found no consistent distribution policies and criteria used by units.
- The committee could find no documentation of college distribution policies and asked the Provost to inquire of the deans. The result of the survey (posted on the website) confirmed that there is no single consistent policy across the units.
- Policies and practices have been developed to fit the needs and circumstances of the individual units.

At a previous RSC meeting there was a recommendation of 5% IDC taken off the top and distributed to the PI. This idea was discussed and the IDC Committee did not support the RSC recommendation, noting that flexibility in the use of IDC was warranted. They recommended a focus on transparency. Dr. Clarke said transparency was what the funds were being spent on. Dr. Fletcher said that faculty members have dialogues within their departments about IDC distribution to the PI because it is allowable and some departments and colleges distribute to PIs.

Dr. Fletcher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Burns moved adjournment and Dr. Neighbors seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 PM.

**The next meeting will be January 16 from 1:30 – 3:00 PM in the Faculty Senate Conference Room (MD Anderson Library).**