

Wayne State University
Academic Senate
Minutes of the Research Committee
April 29, 2010

Present: Cinabro, Avrutsky, Kessel, MacArthur, Mattoo, Mordukhovich, Pearson, Thomas, Wang, Withey, Arking, Dunbar

Guests Director for the Responsible Conduct of Research Gayle Kusch

We began by hearing from Gayle Kusch about a new post-approval monitoring systems of research protocols using animals. This is a new program at Wayne State, but similar programs are in place at the University Michigan and at Michigan State University. It is likely that the NIH will be mandating such a program in the near future. The program is run by Joe Monsur who ran an animal research lab at Michigan for ten years. He is just starting this program, and has only done a handful of inspections as of today.

There are roughly 450 grants that use animals, mostly rodents. The way the program works is that Joe contacts a randomly selected PI to schedule a meeting and a lab visit. He then meets with the PI and possibly staff to go over the requirements which include available documentation and the protocols. He then visits the lab to see if the procedures are being followed. If he finds problems he helps the PI file amendments if the original proposal protocol has changed as the research has advanced. He will also identify if training is needed to remain in compliance with the rules. The results of the review are confidential and are only shared with the PI. As of now each monitoring inspection is taking about a week. Gayle shared with us the forms that are used in the monitoring, a recent discussion at the Michigan Society for Medical Research on post-approval monitoring, and the original announcement of the program which appeared in Reseach@Wayne in late January.

Committee members were mostly unaware of the existence of such a program. For it to be effective, since only 40-50 inspections will be done each year, it has to be widely publicized that such a program exists and the labs have to be chosen randomly. There is suspicion from a PI who has been inspected that he was not chosen randomly, but was being singled out due to recent run in with the AIC. Gayle assured us that it was not so; the choice of labs is truly random.

While no one appreciates extra work that is not directly related to research out comes the committee did not find much to object about with this program. PI's are given time to prepare for the review and inspection. All agreed that it is painful, but necessary to keep documentation of protocols up to date, and it would be far worse to have an external entity find a serious problem. Keys to making it effective are widely publicizing its existence and being truly random in choosing which labs to inspect. Thus PI's will be encouraged to remain in compliance and have no excuse when the inspector calls.

Gayle left the meeting noting that she had to do more to publicize the existence of the program to those conducting research with animals and the intent at keeping us in compliance rather than to hinder research.

The committee approved the draft minutes of the March meeting with no changes.

We then discussed the draft presentation for the senate meeting on 12 May. Most of the discussion was on the subject of Research Incentives. Joe described to us the current evolution of the report from the Presidential committee he chairs on the subject. The report is nearly final, and Joe gave us its current recommendations. All graduate students who are externally supported would have their tuition paid by the University. There was some discussion about this, Rodger wanted to know if "graduate student" includes a technician employee who is also going to graduate school, which is clearly an ambiguous case. Those from the main campus found this highly attractive as it reduces costs for graduate students by about 20%. It is less attractive at the Med School where fewer graduate students participate in research.

Once a researcher starts out performing the unit median and receives more than 25% of their base salary from external sources the excess will be returned to the PI. There is flexibility in how this can be used (salary, teaching relief, support for research, etc.) which will be decided by agreement between the PI and the head of the unit. While Boris wants us to be more forceful in denouncing the current policy in the Math Department, everybody regardless of their research activities teaches two courses, Joe pointed out the difficulty of one-size-fits-all research incentives and thought that the new plan of giving PI's a pool of money that they can use to bargain with their unit head is the best idea. This part of the program is more attractive in the Med School where it is more likely that PI's can get a large fraction of their salary funded externally.

Cinabro will rewrite the slide, but continues to not want to be too specific about what we say about research incentives. The work of Joe's committee seems to be going in an excellent direction and the time for us to speak on this will be when we get a chance to review the committee report. Likely we will strongly endorse its conclusions.

We also discussed Research versus Scholarship. Fred pointed out that we do little to encourage research in disciplines that do not typically get large grants, but that such activities (hosting conferences, writing books, etc.) contribute to the University's reputation. What can be done to encourage this sort of research especially when merit based pay increases are very small. Cinabro will add a bullet point to the slide, but this a large topic that probably needs more investigation and thought than we have so far given it.

Cinabro promised to have a revised draft of the presentation for the committee to review before the end of next week. Over the summer the presentation will be written up as a report.