

Academic Senate Research Committee Minutes February 17, 2022

Via Zoom

Time: 3 pm – 4:02 pm

Members present: Noreen Rossi (chair), Alan Dombkowski, Krishnarao Maddipati, Joseph Roche, Shirley Papuga, Robert Harr, Tamara Bray, Karen MacDonell, Carol Miller, Robert Reynolds, Ramzi Mohammad, Le Yi Wang, Lance Heilbrun, Arun Iyer, Timothy Stemmler (liaison)

Members absent with notice: Christian Bozeman (liaison); Wanda Gibson Scipio, Edward Cackett (liaison), Jennifer Lewis, Hossein Yarandi

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm and minutes from the January meeting were approved.

Discussion regarding the Research Misconduct policy ensued.

Dr. MacDonnell raised the issue re: the amount of effort and salary being required on grants that appears to be more a focused issue in the School of Medicine. She also pointed out that her department (Family Medicine) does not have a grants administrator any longer for grant submissions. Her department was told that they were “putting in too many grants.” She said that they no longer have help from RAS either.

Dr. Dombkowski mentioned that there was a cutoff for a department having their own grants administrative personnel, \$5 million. This cutoff was confirmed by Dr. Rossi. Dr. Rossi suggested having Dr. Hazlett come to clarify how RAS works, as it may be helpful if the committee agrees. For example, Internal Medicine had their grants administrator taken into RAS, and then they were given their own. The person assigned to Internal Medicine then left for a main campus position and that department is now using RAS again until they can hire their own administrator. Apparently, there are only 2 individuals in RAS. Dr. MacDonnell stated that RAS is honoring the grants that were planned for the time being. Overall, with the impetus to put in/get more grants, there needs to be better infrastructure to get the grants.

The issue of time/effort/salary on grants being 30% appears to be School of Medicine specific. It was supposed to be “encouraged” but appears to have been “enforced” in some cases. It is unclear if the deans have the authority to do so. Prof. Papuga stated she is not aware that CLAS has made such a suggestion or requirement.

Prof. Harr pointed out that in CLAS the salary structure for grants is different since the faculty salary on grants covers summer months. Dr. Stemmler stated that in his department level there is a policy of 25% but not at the School of Allied Health level. Dr. Roche mentioned his department is very flexible, encouraged to have a fair percent effort that is proportionate to the time that will be needed on the grant. He also pointed out that when he was starting out for an R03, his chair counselled him to be careful that the effort/salary he put in should not be “trivial,” that is, it should be appropriate to the work proposed. He even called the program officer who agreed with the chair. Dr. Rossi noted that what Dr. Roche mentioned is a rational approach. There is also the concern by many faculty that putting more salary on grants may preclude having funds for a postdoctoral fellow or may put the grant over the NIH “cap.” The NIH cap is such that permission is required if the annual grant is more than a certain amount which she

could not recall at that time but is a direct cost of \$500,000/yr. On the other hand, not putting effort/salary commensurate with the work proposed can also be an issue for the study section reviewers if insufficient or excess time is allotted, even though they do not make the final funding decisions.

In addition, there is rumor that the School of Medicine is asking 10% for co-investigators instead of 5%. Dr. MacDonnell stated that she has had this come up. She also pointed out that faculty are so diverse in their research activities that one-size-fits-all does not work well especially with multidisciplinary research and across schools/colleges and institutions.

Dr. Rossi also raised the issue that the fact that clinician researchers can put on an R01 is "bizarre." Clinicians now in the School of Medicine were cut back to the 0.5FTE and at the minimum salary for that rank. So, even if they put 50% of their WSU salary on a grant, the grant would cover only ~\$15,000 - \$18,000 of the salary since the clinical salary cannot be put into the grant (the clinical salary is in a separate entity – UPG/Wayne Health). UCLA and others have separate practice plan but they put their whole permissible (barring NIH cap) salary on the grant. She pointed out that we were very close to getting an agreement to permit the whole salary via "common paymaster" but the process was scuttled by the Office of General Counsel. Perhaps, now with a new General Counsel, this may be revisited. This is important because if a clinician scientist can only put \$15,000 of their salary on the grant, they still need to make their salary from clinical duties otherwise not make their salary. This is detrimental to the investigator, to the research enterprise (conflict of time) and hurts the University. We are leaving money on the table. This leaves money in the seven figures that the University could get.

Dr. Ramzi submitted an R21 and confirmed he was required to put 25% of his salary so he had to remove his co-investigator so he could keep his postdoctoral fellow.

Dr. Rossi asked if individuals in CLAS are required to put in 2 months for their summer research. Dr. Harr said that if they do not put in salary for the summer they do not get paid for the summer months. On the other hand, if they only want to put in 1 month of summer salary on the grant, they are not prevented from doing so. Dr. Harr also pointed out that the faculty do not have to take the salary but can "return" it to pay graduate students or part of a postdoctoral fellow.

Dr. Rossi also raised the issue that occurs when NIH or any agency gives an across the board cut (10-25% in some cases) and the faculty are obligated to have 30% of their salary on the grant, this really leaves little if any funds to do the research proposed.

Dr. Harr brought up the issue of graduate student tuition which is not in line with what other institutions are and makes our cost look high compared with other institutions, even private institutions. Who is responsible for the policy on graduate student tuition on grants? This is particularly of importance for smaller foundational grants, though these agencies often do not support tuition. Dr. Dombkowski mentioned that the issue of graduate student tuition was brought up in their subcommittee on Post Pandemic Higher Education for research. This relates tangentially with graduate students' admissions being down. If the funding is an issue, that also contributes to our recruitment. Dr. Harr said we need to distinguish master's vs PhD students since the master's student pay their way.

Lengthening the time for PhD to degree has been approved. There is discussion regarding increasing tenure track time as well but not yet finalized.

Research Misconduct Policy. Dr. Rossi reminded the committee we need to decide upon

recommendation to this policy. The policy has a very circular structure. The policy states there are two committees: Inquiry Committee and Investigative Committee. The Inquiry Committee is set up by the Research Integrity Officer (RIO, Assoc VP for Research) and decides whether there is anything to inquire about. The Inquiry Committee reports to the RIO. If an investigation is needed, then the Investigative Committee is empaneled by the RIO. The Investigative Committee then reports to the RIO and Deciding Officer (DO; VP for Research). There was concern regarding the circular structure as noted above. In addition, the policy was put in place to protect the confidentiality of the accused as well as the individual bringing the allegation. The Hearing Committees are not involved since the investigations require expertise in the area of research.

Dr. Rossi proposed the following that after the above is done, it should come to some faculty panel. The issue is not regarding expertise but whether the process was followed without bias or discrimination. In addition, Hearing Panel itself is held to confidentiality. Dr. Maddipati raised that any decision needs to go to ORI (Office of Research Integrity), but there may be some things that fall below that level. The Hearing Panel would not look at the science but at the process. Hopefully this would satisfy the concerns. Dr. Maddipati raised the possibility of appeal if the process was not fair.

Dr. Wang pointed out there is one decision maker. To be fair, there should be an appeal process away from the policy that is currently used. An appeal process may provide a balance.

Dr. Rossi noted that the process can go both ways but someone who has committed misconduct would not be sanctioned.

Dr. Ramzi asked if the Hearing Panel should include a member from the Research Committee. Dr. Maddipati favored picking from individuals on the Hearing Committee panel.

Dr. Wang asked about who could appeal. What if the Panel makes a decision and the DO disagrees? Will the Panel have the right to appeal? What happens if the RIO or the DO do not follow the recommendation of the Inquiry or Investigation Committees? The current policy does not speak to this eventuality. This needs to be clarified and updated if there is a difference between the panel and the DO.

Dr. Rossi will send out a draft and send it out to the committee members.