

**RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)**  
**1 p.m. on Monday, November 2, 2020**  
**via Zoom**

**Present:**

Jeremy Alajajian	Stacy Leotta
Darlene Booker	Sherry Loyd
Lesley Brown	Carl Mahler
Denise Bradley-Fluellen	Angelica Martins
Vikki Cherwon	Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza
Valerie Crickard	Nikki Simmons
Paul Cryer	Peter Szanton
Stafford Farmer	Mary Welsh
Elaine Jacobs	Shanda Wirt
Rachel Ladenheim	Ellen Zavala

**Absent:**

Audrey Callahan	Marian Castle
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The meeting started at 1:01 p.m.

**Meeting Opening:**

**I. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 9/7/20 RAAC meeting**

Lesley Brown moved to accept the minutes as submitted, which motion was seconded by Ellen Zavala and passed without opposition.

**Old Business:**

**II. Final Approval of Revised Agreement for Educational Expenses Paid by Training and Sponsored Awards**

Valerie Crickard reported that she had received no responses from any of the colleges regarding this agreement; if she receives none by the end of day she will assume that there is no opposition to it. Carl Mahler moved that if Ms. Crickard does not receive any disapproval of the proposed agreement by the end of the work day then the agreement will be deemed to have been approved. The motion was second by Paul Cryer and passed without opposition

**III. Revised Policy 50.5/Compliance with UG 200.466 Update**

Dr. Tankersley discussed the proposed changes to Policy 50.5 and the timetable for implementation; he expects full implementation will take about eighteen months, starting in the Spring, 2021 semester for those students who will be supported in the Fall, 2021 semester. It will start with a list of pilot/phase 1 programs and the remaining programs will be given an additional year come into compliance. The core proposition of the policy is that graduate programs can only charge research grants

for tuition and fees, such as for health insurance, if students who are supported from other sources of funds (e.g., for students who are supported as TA's) receive similar benefits. If there is no policy for providing similar support in compensation packages supported by other funding sources then tuition and fees cannot be supported by a grant.

The goal is for all programs across campus to establish these compensation packages in addition to any stipend provided to the students; in addition, the stipend levels must be comparable. Dr. Tankersley has identified a number of programs – primarily doctoral programs – that he believes are very close to meeting this requirement, and the University will start bringing other programs come into compliance over the coming academic year. Programs will NOT be able to charge tuition against grants until they come into compliance. Lesley Brown asked if someone would compile a list of programs that are in compliance, and Dr. Tankersley answered affirmatively. Under the proposed timeline, packages will be publicized as of March 1. Peter Szanton noted that it might be better to make this list available earlier in the year, and that perhaps this date would change over time. Jeremy Alajajian noted that Graduate Assistantships must be approved by Academic Affairs even when State funds are not being used, which slows approval down by at least a week. Dr. Tankersley asked Mr. Alajajian to provide examples so that he can investigate whether such approval must remain a requirement. If State-funded support only provides in-State tuition, then grants cannot be charged for out-of-State tuition; support will be limited to in-State tuition. Dr. Tankersley noted that the policy is still a draft and asked all members to review the proposed policy and suggest any changes that they feel are appropriate. A vote for the final adoption will be held at next month's RAAC meeting, after Dr. Tankersley has had a chance to discuss it with the Associate Deans of the various colleges. Ms. Crickard asked if the policy would be uploaded into Niner Research for each proposal so that it will be possible to check whether charges change as program compensation changes; this could result in re-budgeting in the out years of grants.

#### **New Business:**

##### **IV. Project Roles in Niner Research**

The concept of "project roles" arose as a result of planning for implementation of Niner Research and User Acceptance Testing of pre-awards; this will be important as the University switches over to more System-to-System ("S2S") submissions. NORM is not connected to funder submission systems, so it is possible in NORM have multiple co-PI's, but some funding agencies such as Department of Defense only allow one PI. With S2S submission the roles assigned in Niner Research will be the roles that are transmitted to the sponsor, so it is important to have the internally assigned project roles align with each sponsor's requirements. Mr. Szanton suggested having the project roles align with each sponsors' requirements and asked for input from the other RAAC members. Ms. Brown agreed that this change would be appropriate and that it is probably necessary. She noted that people seem to think that faculty don't

get “credit” for grants unless they are PI’s or Co-PI’s, and this perception must change. Sherry Loyd noted that in NORM being a Co-PI triggers a requirement for Col disclosures and asked if this will continue in Niner Research; Ms. Brown noted that people can be designated as “key personnel” rather than Co-PI’s, thereby triggering the requirement of a current financial disclosure. Dr. Tankersley pointed out that the proposed changes would make our internal reporting match what we report to external groups, which is not currently the case.

**V. Deadline for receiving all proposal materials**

Niner Research requires that virtually all required information be entered before the approval routing can start. This means that all of the proposal documents must be received earlier than has been the case in the past. Currently the documents can be submitted asynchronously, but because Niner Research requires proposals to be complete before they can be submitted via S2S all the documents must be provided before routing begins. This in turn means that all documents must be submitted 48 to 72 hours prior to submission in order to complete the routing in time. Ms. Brown noted that timely submission of documents is necessary for a number of reasons, not just for routing. We can do some testing of the new system internally now but we cannot test what happens after submission to the funders, so it is important to actually submit proposals earlier than the deadline in order that there will be time for errors and glitches to be addressed prior to any deadlines. This will force several culture shifts on the researchers and research administrators. Ms. Brown noted that larger schools require completion of all documents seven or, more commonly, ten days before submission to the funders; in contrast, UNC Charlotte currently only requires completion of the documents five days prior to submission. Dr. Tankersley asked for Mr. Szanton to outline the changes that will be made moving forward for project roles and for deadlines. These changes will be provided at next month’s RAAC meeting and then discussed with the Associate Deans before being implemented. Paul Cryer asked if there would be some penalty for repeat offenders and Dr. Tankersley indicated that this might be advisable. Mr. Szanton noted that the “five day policy” would need to be revised and could include consequences for missing deadlines. Per Ms. Brown it is relatively common for larger schools to require approval from department chairs and deans if the seven or ten day deadline is missed.

**VI. Standardization of Excel spreadsheets for budgets in research proposals**

Currently there are at least three different versions of spreadsheets that are being used for preparing budgets in research proposals; one is used by folks in Cameron Hall, one by CLAS, and another by the College of Engineering. Carl Mahler noted that as we implement Niner Research we are trying to standardize our procedures across campus, including standardizing spreadsheets. The consensus is that the format of the spreadsheets currently used by the College of Engineering will be used going forward, but the various offices are currently reviewing the spreadsheet to determine whether any changes should be made to it. Shanda Wirt will send copies of the

current version. The budget development tool in InfoEd is not as robust as some colleges prefer, so most proposals will still use an Excel spreadsheet for use during the routing for approval. Per Ms. Brown, some sponsors require us to use their format so not all proposals will use the same spreadsheet. Ms. Crickard noted that further discussion of the matter is needed because the budget from InfoEd is the document that will be uploaded into Banner. This will be discussed at a future RAAC meeting.

**VII. Transition Plan for Unsubmitted Proposals Initiated in NORM Prior to the Launch of Niner Research**

Mr. Mahler reported that all work on proposals that have been previously submitted, as well as all proposals that are still being created but have not yet been routed for approval, will be performed in Niner Research. Proposals for which routing approval has begun but has not yet been completed at the time that the Grants modules in Niner Research go live will remain in NORM until all approvals are complete, after which all further actions will be performed in Niner Research.

**VIII. Personnel changes and realignment of job assignments in GCA**

Kathy Edwards is working with Mechanical Engineering effective today. Zach Carlton, who previously handled invoicing, has left the University; Tracee Jackson will be taking over this responsibility.

The meeting ended at 2:03.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II