

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)

11 a.m. on Monday, November 4, 2019

Reese 524

New Business:

I. Welcome & committee structure & charge

Dr. Tankersley welcomed the Council members and discussed the objectives, goals and charge of the reimagined RAAC. He explained that the “new RAAC” was in response to several recommendations outlined in the NCURA peer-review report that was circulated in the spring. The Council is an advisory group, and occasionally a decision-making body, made up of representatives (directors and associate/assistant directors) from key RED units and college research offices. Colleges without research office personnel are represented by staff members with grant administration responsibilities. The Council’s charge and functions include:

1. Identifying areas of improvement with the goal of enhancing the function, efficiency, and effectiveness of research administration (both pre- and post-award).
2. Serving as a forum for the discussion and vetting of proposed actions, programs, and policies impacting research administration, and
3. Enhancing and facilitating dialog and communication among campus stakeholders and members of UNC Charlotte’s research administration community.

Dr. Tankersley mentioned that nominations/recommendations for a Vice Chair and Scribe (note taker) would be solicited from the members (see V. below). Bylaws for the Council would be drafted and circulated for comment and approval at a later meeting. Meeting agenda and minutes would be posted on the RED website.

II. Update on InfoEd implementation

Mr. Mahler noted that no one at UNC Charlotte has had experience with InfoEd, so no one here knows the software. As a result the subject matter experts on the various modules have each had to train themselves in using and designing modules for InfoEd. This has resulted in difficulties because the module leads for the first modules to be implemented (conflicts of interest, laboratory animals module, and biosafety) have all left the University or have taken over additional responsibilities that left them little time for implementing their modules. Although this has delayed deployment of the various modules, we now have employees in these roles who are working on implementing the various modules. In addition we have also hired Chris Krumm to be our “InfoEd Manager” so that the subject matter leads do not have to become expert in InfoEd – Chris’ hire will allow us to leverage the lessons learned from the earlier modules when others come on line. We are currently continuing the good work that Angelica Martins started in BioSafety, re-evaluating and broadening our thinking of how we are going to approach the Lab Animals module, and it appears that we will be able to largely adopt the Conflict of Interest module from another university (Yale) which will save a significant amount of time. We expect to “go live” on several modules in the February to March timeline; note that this means that the modules will be used for beta testing, not

that they will automatically replace the legacy systems currently in use. We hope to have the Conflict of Interest module fully implemented by the time annual disclosures are required in 2020. We are in the early stages of determining how we will implement the Proposal Development module. We are using the InfoEd implementation to make changes to make our activities more efficient and consistent – for instance, the designations of various protocols in Compliance will now be changed to reflect the fiscal year in which they created rather than the calendar year.

III. Close-out spending policy

See Attachment: “RAP: Expenses within 90 days of project end date”

Some PI’s have been spending significant amounts of grant/contract money in the last 90 days of the grant/contract life; some of these expenditures have been on items such as laptops and supplies. Supplies should not be purchased using grant funds. The new policy is being established to prevent misuse of grant funds and to provide consistency across campus for how award monies are spent. Moving forward, purchases made within 90 days of an award’s end date will be discouraged; while not prohibited, such expenditures will be closely scrutinized. The request of a no-cost extension could affect approval of expenditures (note that requests for extensions should be noted in the comments fields for any proposed expenditures). If no one raises objections, this policy will be implemented following the next RAAC meeting.

IV. Training grant policies/procedures

Peter Szanton noted that some students receive stipends under training grants and that, per the terms of the grants, if those students drop out of this training then they need to pay back the stipends if they remain students at the University. In many cases the University can add up to 5% administrative fees and interest on top of the principal amount to be repaid. Some research administrators mistakenly believed that UNC Charlotte had a formal policy on repayment of training grants when the students discontinued their participation in the training, but upon investigation it was found that UNC Charlotte has not formally adopted any such policy. Valerie Crickard is now working on developing this policy along with representatives from Student Aid and the Bursar’s office (***note to Rick: I’m not sure that I included all the offices that might be involved in developing this policy***). Mr. Szanton noted that some grant recipients are treated as University employees while other students are not, so consistent treatment of training grants may be difficult. Vice Chancellor Tankersley noted that this discussion entails two separate questions, i.e., (i) the need for a policy regarding repayment of stipend and/or tuition and (ii) decisions as to how pre-award and implementation of training grants should be structured going forward. The answer to the latter question may vary depending on the specific wording of the training grants. It is worth noting that with respect to several current situations the agreements that have been signed by the students may not comport with the University’s current procedures. Dr. Tankersley instructed Ms. Crickard to establish a working group to document our current practices in pre-awards concerning the use of stipend, wages, and tuition assistance under training grants. He noted that the working group should include college research officers as well as staff from GCA and a representative from the

Bursar's office. The working group will be co-chaired by Ms. Crickard and Mr. Szanton. This group may need several weeks to accomplish its task.

V. Pre-Proposal Research Policy

Attachment: "Tufts policy on pre-proposals for sponsored projects"

Data on pre-proposals is a new metric that may be tracked in the future. The Tufts policy roughly mirrors the University's current practices. If pre-proposals and regular proposals are to be tracked separately in the future it will be important to specify what needs to be included in InfoEd to enable such separate tracking. This could affect the Proposal Development module within InfoEd. Criteria will need to be identified in order to determine what qualifies as a pre-proposal and what does not. The tracking of pre-proposals can be used as an indication of workload on the research administrators. In addition, some pre-proposals must be tracked because of limitations on the number of proposals that a single university can make in response to an RFP.

Mr. Szanton recommends following Tufts' policy with appropriate changes as needed, and that criteria be established for how pre-proposals will be tracked in InfoEd. AOR's, White Papers, Letters of Intent, and limited submissions should all be considered as potential candidates for tracking as pre-proposals. Dr. Tankersley cautioned that imposition of new burdens on faculty should be minimized, particularly if few proposals will be counted as pre-proposals. Shanda Wirt suggested that faculty be consulted as to how much additional work such tracking would impose on them and noted that the research administration offices are already doing most of this work. Dr. Tankersley noted that a level of additional scrutiny may be necessary for proposals should the sponsor require specific assurances of compliance prior to proposal submission. It will also be important to consider how to implement any tracking of pre-proposals in such a way as to avoid duplicative data entry into InfoEd, i.e., the pre-proposal information should "roll into" any subsequent proposals.

Dr. Tankersley tasked Mr. Szanton with modifying the Tufts policy as appropriate for UNC Charlotte by the next RAAC meeting.

VI. Vice Chair nominations

Dr. Tankersley requested that the members of the RAAC submit nominations for vice-chair of the committee and for recording secretary by mid-November.

Old Business:

Monday, 11/18 – the College of Health and Human Services will sponsor an "NIH Day" starting at 9:00am; there will be representatives from 7 or 8 local colleges.

December 5 (evening) – the annual R&ED holiday celebration will include Jennifer Grisham speaking on "the future of work."

The meeting ended at 12:05 PM