

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)
1 p.m. on Monday, February 3, 2020
Reese 524

Present:

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

Absent

Gail Keene	Angelica Martins	Ellen Zavala
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The meeting opened at 1:00 PM

1. Approval of 1/6/20 RAAC Meeting Minutes

Prior to the meeting, Rick Tankersley made the change requested by Stacy Leotta to the F&A Waiver Request by adding a notation that such waivers should be accompanied by a cover memo; no other changes to the minutes were proposed. Lesley Brown moved to accept the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Stafford Farmer and passed without objection.

Unfinished Business:

1. Revision of Policy 50.5 Tuition Remission for Graduate Students Supported on Sponsored Awards

Dr. Tankersley reported that his discussion with representatives from the Graduate School on this topic has been postponed to later in February and he anticipated that he will be able to present information from that discussion at the March RAAC meeting. Topics to be discussed include:

(i) establishing before the start of the 2021 fiscal year a set pay scale for all graduate students within the various programs as required by Uniform Guidance. It is likely that the pay scale will be different for the various Colleges and perhaps may vary between programs within a College.

(ii) tuition rebudget process for the protection of tuition dollars. Valerie Crickard reported that GCA currently asks for approval of tuition money in budgets, but this amount will not be separately broken out in the future. She emphasized the need to ensure that proper F&A rates are included. Lesley Brown said that some faculty currently budget tuition but then use the money that was budgeted for tuition to cover other expenses. Per Dr. Tankersley, the Graduate School requires that tuition be paid from the source of the stipend, but he wants to move away from the current practice of freezing that money (which results in the money not being spent until the end of the grant period). Uniform Guidance allows rebudgeting of up to 25% of a grant, and that is the policy that UNC Charlotte will follow in the future. This will provide more flexibility for the faculty. Pairing of tuition and stipends is expected, so that tuition will be prorated along with other student support (e.g., stipends). Ms. Crickard asked research administrators to watch for whether large proportions of grants are going toward supplies or other non-student support. If a student is receiving a stipend

then that student should receive the appropriate amount of tuition support from the same source as provides the stipend. Shanda Wirt asked how, at the pre-award stage, things should be handled if a faculty member says that a graduate student has another source of support? Dr. Tankersley responded that if the student is working on the grant during the Academic Year then appropriate support for the student must be included in the budget. Other policies, such as limitations on the number of hours that students can work, come into play even if the students are hired as temporary employees. Dr. Tankersley will check whether different rules apply if the students are supported by internal funds rather than from grant funding. He expects there to be several iterations to the modification of Policy 50.5, and he asked that any concerns that any RAAC members have be brought to his attention early in the process.

2. Update on training grant policies/procedures

Peter Szanton and Ms. Crickard continue working on policies and procedures relating to repayment of training grants; they hope to develop a Frequently Asked Questions document on training policies soon. Brad Trahan in the Office of Legal Affairs has revised a repayment agreement for such grants, and his draft is being reviewed by the various colleges; it allows for the students to take up to five years for repayment rather than the two year period that was allowed in the earlier version. Dr. Tankersley will circulate the document to the RAAC members prior to the March meeting. Once adopted, the repayment agreement will be available for download on GCA's website. The repayment agreement includes information about specific programs available as well as a section specifying the terms and conditions for how to repay the money if a student withdraws from one of these programs. Dr. Tankersley asked if all students currently being supported on training programs will be required to sign this agreement. Mr. Szanton has asked new students to delay signing the new form until it has been formally approved, but he expressed no opinion as to whether to require students currently in these programs to sign the agreement. Ms. Crickard noted that she does not know how many people may be affected by this. Dr. Tankersley recommended that before the document is adopted Laura Williams should be consulted to learn how many students will be affected by it, as she has access to a list of current training awards. He also recommended not circulating the template beyond the RAAC membership until any remaining questions have been resolved and Laura Williams has made a recommendation as to how to handle students current funded under these programs. He also asked the RAAC members to check whether they have any scholarships that might fall into the category of training grants.

New Business:

1. Direct Research Award Oversight

Last year the College of Engineering received a direct award from the State of North Carolina without any actual cash transfer. This award was not counted in the University's reports to the UNC system although the award resulted from an RFP. A specific fund number is being assigned to the award and Ms. Crickard is working on how to ensure that we remain in compliance on this award. The money will remain in Business Affairs but GCA will manage it as it would any other award with the exception that because it came from the UNC system it will not be counted in our reports to the system office. The University receives very few awards directly from the UNC system, but we need handle them in a consistent manner; F&A is not applied to these grants because F&A only applies to money that is

received from outside of the UNC system. Ms. Crickard will work with Stafford Farmer and Ellen Zavala to ensure that these funds are transferred correctly.

2. Human Subject Payments, How to Pay

Dr. Tankersley copies of the current procedure for providing payments to human subjects as well as copies of the draft revision to that document. This procedure is being changed because of revisions to the tax laws. The current policy largely prohibits using money from petty cash accounts to pay human subjects; the new policy discourages that use but allows it. The cap of \$25 has been raised to \$100, with a maximum amount in petty cash being raised to \$5,000 (this is not an absolute limit – under extraordinary circumstances a higher limit may be established). There are significant burdens on the people who establish and oversee the petty cash accounts. Dr. Tankersley asked that the proposed revisions be shared within the various colleges and that any comments received be brought to the March RAAC meeting. If students or university employees are targeted for human subjects research and are paid for their participation then the payments are taxable; if students and employees are not targeted, the money does not even need to be tracked for tax purposes. Different petty cash funds must be established for each study.

3. Academic Analytics Faculty Insight and External Discovery Suites

Last year Academic Affairs purchased modules for gathering publicly available information about faculty members interests in order to enable measuring the impact of those faculty members and to develop profiles (“fingerprints”) of those faculty members. The modules use abstracts, titles, descriptions of awards, etc. to establish those profiles. Once the profiles have been established, keywords can be used to search them. The entire process requires very little input from the faculty. One of the modules (“Faculty Insights”) is internal to the University; the other is available to people outside the University, and enables them to identify faculty members who have specific research interests. Faculty have to log into the Faculty Insights module using their Niner login credentials to look for potential collaborators; the module also identifies funders of researchers having similar profiles, and this information can be used to identify potential sources of funding. Articles, grants, timelines of those documents, and scholars with similar profiles can all be called up using the modules, and faculty can add additional information to their profiles. The Faculty Insights module will be launched in a few months, followed by the external module. Ultimately Dr. Tankersley wants these profiles to be updated from InfoEd on a regular schedule.

The meeting ended at 2:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II