

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)
1 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2020
via Zoom

Present:

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

Absent:

Gail Keene
Carl Mahler

The meeting opened at 1:02 p.m.

I. Approval of 4/6/20 RAAC Meeting Minutes and 3/12/20 RAAC Special Meeting Minutes

Both sets of minutes were circulated electronically prior to the meeting. No amendments were offered. Denise Bradley-Fluellen moved that the minutes be adopted and placed on file as submitted, seconded by Lesley Brown; the motion passed without objection.

Old Business:

II. Tiger Team Update: Pre- and Post-Award Plan (*Rick Tankersley & Peter Szanton*)

a. Current continuity of operations

Mr. Peter Szanton stated that most of the people on this RAAC call were involved in the planning of either the pre- or post-award plans for the college research offices.

The post-award plan that was circulated with this meeting agenda was completed a week ago. The process was similar to the pre-award plan. With the post-award plan, limitations of certain types of expertise made how many backups that could be readily identified more complicated; but a post-award expertise matrix was also created for instances where the unit backups did not work and you were looking for backups for special types of expertise. For the most part, the process went relatively smoothly.

b. Additional, unforeseen challenges

Dr. Tankersley thanked everyone for putting together the pre- and post-award planning documents and conveyed that we should treat it as a living document that serves as a roadmap for what our plan will be moving forward. Dr. Tankersley said that he has shared these plans with the Provost and prior to our next meeting, he will share this document with the Associate Deans for Research for their input. He suggested that we keep this topic on the agenda for future RAAC meetings to revisit and revise the document as needed.

III. Revision of Policy 50.5/Compliance with UG 200.466 (Update) (tabled until June)

IV. Training Grant Policies/Procedures Update (tabled until June)

V. Graduate TA and RA Definitions (Rick Tankersley)

At the April RAAC meeting, Dr. Tankersley shared the policy proposal from the Graduate School on Graduate Teaching Assistantship and Graduate Research Assistantship definitions. He inquired if there were any concerns raised by faculty in the colleges on how Graduate TAs and RAs are defined and administered. Mr. Jeremy Alajajian remarked that if the only person able to do graduate assistant supervision is a faculty member with limitations on teaching graduate courses, then the Urban Institute has a single faculty member on staff, Dr. Lori Thomas, able to do so. The policy would hurt the way the Urban Institute is able to do their research. Ms. Lesley Brown indicated that the definitions of what students can be doing are very narrow. She suggested the need to add a category that is not teaching or research. Ms. Denise Bradley-Fluellen said that just like Mr. Alajajian, the College of Education has a PI who is EHRA non-faculty and has graduate students working on her project and the definition would exclude her; the college also a faculty member whose graduate students are supervised by an EHRA non-faculty member who would be affected. Ms. Vikki Cherwon stated that in her college, there is one instance where a research faculty is a PI but does not have a teaching position, has graduate students working on his project that he would oversee.

There was agreement that the language in the Graduate School's draft policy would need to be modified. Dr. Tankersley stated that he would check with the Graduate School on whether they can revisit the requirement to include graduate RAs who do administrative work. He said their policy is not aligned with our current policy of who can serve as a PI or Co-PI. He said he would highlight Lesley's comment on the way they define a RA which does not include students in an administrative role, who would be doing work as a part of the grant but not conducting research directly related to their dissertation or thesis.

VI. Human Subject Payments Revisions Approval (tabled until June)

New Business:

VII. Supervision of Graduate Research Assistants by Faculty (Denise Bradley-Fluellen – 10 minutes)

Ms. Bradley-Fluellen stated that this topic has already been addressed under the discussion on Graduate TA and RA definitions.

VIII. Research, Restart and Restoration Task Force (Rick Tankersley – 5 minutes)

Dr. Tankersley communicated that a Research Restart & Restoration (RR&R) Task Force was created a couple of weeks ago with approximately 25 people from across campus. The purpose of this Task Force is to plan for the shift in our operational status in resuming

research activity on campus using a phased approach with guidance from federal, state, and local governments to steer our operation. The Task Force is looking at University operations during the summer months, which is a moving target. We are currently under the Governor's stay-at-home order until May 8. The Task Force will plan and recommend guidelines for the type of research that will be allowed on campus during the coming months; those recommendations will be incorporated into a broader plan; the first phase of that plan could go into effect as early as May 9, and from there, we will gradually enter into Phases 2 and 3. The Task Force is mapping their recommendations against these phases. It is unlikely that we will see a drastic change in the Governor's Phase 1 recommendations. Teleworking is being encouraged. The University has to plan for people to return to campus; are we disinfecting areas; are only certain public areas to be open? Changes in campus operations in March will likely stay in place until the third week of May, until Phase 2 of the Governor's plan. By the end of May, we will have an increase in the number of faculty doing research on campus under structured policies and guidelines provided by the Task Force.

In addition to the RR&R Task Force, Dr. Angelica Martins is chairing a committee for a testing and contact tracing facility on campus. Dr. Martins stated that the committee is in the early stages of looking at the facilities and labs available for diagnostic testing and maintaining compliance paperwork. Dr. Martins is working with Cathy Moore, Biosafety Officer and the Student Health Center to determine if we do have the appropriate space/facilities on campus to do this testing, not just for students, but for faculty and staff as well, and to determine the perfect location for this. Having a testing facility will be one of the triggers that will enable us to move forward toward more normal operations.

Finally, it was just announced that the Board of Trustees voted to push back the start of the Fall semester by 2 weeks; the semester will now begin on September 7. This will allow us additional time to prepare for the return of students to campus. The plan is to have on-campus classes under the federal guidelines of social distancing. The RR&R Task Force guidelines will feed into the broader decision made by the Policy Group. Dr. Tankersley stated that he does not anticipate any significant changes in our operation as the Governor announces Phase 1 of the opening.

IX. Processing Summer Contracts for Faculty and Students (20 min)

a. Summer Salary – Will it be allowed? (Valerie Crickard)

b. Guidance to Faculty and Research Offices re: Summer Contracts (Rick Tankersley)

Ms. Valerie Crickard reported receiving a number of EPAFs and PD7s for summer salary which GCA is holding off on processing. Mr. Szanton also conveyed that his college has received a lot of questions from faculty; some faculty have only a single grant that they are working on, so they may be able to postpone work on their grant until later in the summer, and in these instances, the college is encouraging them to do so; but many faculty have 3 months of summer salary and will need to make decisions on their various projects. Given that Summer session begins in 2 weeks, several inquiries are coming in from faculty and graduate students. CLAS has been informing their students informally to assume they can work remotely though

some of the students' work would be lab-based. Mr. Szanton asked if it is possible for students to start work on May 18. He said the process is complicated because some students have research exceptions, some do not; some can continue to work from home while others cannot. Mr. Szanton asked if we should require faculty who are submitting their requests for summer salary for their students to have a contingency plan for what their students can or cannot do from home.

Dr. Tankersley responded that as we stand today under our current stay-at-home order, only the 6 exceptions allowed back in March still stand; we are also under an administrative leave policy that will likely be extended. The administrative leave policy governs both, sponsored awards and state funded positions. So if a faculty member asks for summer salary and they are unable to come to work, they can charge the salary to the grant under the administrative leave policy. However, taking summer salary does not simply grant faculty access to do their work on campus. It will depend on the nature of the research and the conditions on campus. If faculty can work remotely, and the sponsor does not require them to work on campus, we can process those contracts. If the sponsor does not allow them to work remotely, the faculty member has to be careful when submitting a summer contract. If they hire someone on a contract, that person may be immediately eligible for the Families First Leave Act. There is no waiting period for eligibility and a faculty member may not be allowed to cancel the employees contract while they are on administrative or Families First leave.

Dr. Tankersley said that we are in a hiring freeze; all state or sponsored research has to be approved by the Chancellor and Provost. The Chancellor is going to allow HR to make decisions on sponsored research; but Dr. Tankersley cautioned everyone to be careful in processing those contracts as some awards may not qualify for the same flexibility as federal awards. There are different scenarios and how we should handle – If contracts involve work that does not have to be done on campus, those requests can go forward. Those that require access to being on campus can move forward if they have received approval based on the 6 exceptions. There are other contracts that will not fall in these 2 categories and where decisions will need to be made. Dr. Tankersley explained that there is a pause on approving research exceptions because the RR&R Task Force is presently reviewing the research exception process and will need to sign off on them. This is not an easy decision. Factors to consider are:

- Whether the project is federal or non-federal?
- Is it classified as essential research?
- Can the work be done remotely?
- Simply being approved for a summer contract does not qualify for on-campus research

It was suggested that on EPAFs for summer pay, we need to have a mechanism in place for **new hires**, where in the Comments section, the PI certifies that the work will be done remotely with no need to access campus facilities during the summer months. This will all go through HR. Ms. Crickard pointed out that Academic Affairs is currently approving all summer salary for grant funds.

Dr. Tankersley said that once he receives some clarification from HR on the approval process, he will do his best to work out the details to have all documentation in place and share it with everyone. He apologized for the delay in doing so and explained that the changes we have seen and anticipating new direction makes it difficult to plan ahead.

Other Concerns:

Mr. Szanton asked if any of the money from the CARES Act could be used to support sponsored projects. Dr. Tankersley explained that half of the money that the University received goes directly to students. The other 50% is designed to offset the cost that the University has suffered due to the transition to online operations, such as losses in auxiliary food services, residence halls. It is possible that there may be additional CARES Act funding in the future that we may receive directly or indirectly to offset the costs of sponsored research. Currently, Congress is being asked to give agencies additional money to pass on to PIs as supplements to their current awards; and the current estimate is that 15% of supplemental funds to existing awards will be given to PIs to offset the costs of stopping operations and restarting, but we are not looking until June or July before they take up that legislation.

Ms. Brown conveyed that the Department of Education has just released funding for minority institutions under the CARES Act so the University will receive 1.1 million dollars under the Strengthening Institutions Program. The plan is to use the money in much the same way as the CARES Act funding; the University is encouraged, but not required, to give the money to students; we can also use it to offset losses incurred to moving online.

Ms. Brown stated that at a later time, additional funds will be released under the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) seed program. There is no timeline on when those funds will be released. Faculty in the College of Education who are interested in improving secondary and post-secondary education should be on the lookout for the announcement.

Announcements:

Dr. Tankersley announced that he would host a Research Restart Open Forum via Zoom on Friday, May 8 at 11 a.m. -12 Noon to talk about the changes in the University operation over the summer. An announcement will be sent to all Deans, Associate Deans, and Chairs.

The meeting ended at 2:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Aguiar