

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)

1 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2020

via Zoom

Present:

Jeremy Alajajian
Darlene Booker
Denise Bradley-Fluellen
Lesley Brown
Audrey Callahan
Vikki Cherwon
Valerie Crickard
Elaine Jacobs
Stacy Leotta
Sherry Loyd

Carl Mahler
Angelica Martins
Sheryl Meyer
Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza
Nikki Simmons
Peter Szanton
Mary Welsh
Shanda Wirt
Ellen Zavala

Absent:

Paul Cryer
Stafford Farmer

Gail Keene

The meeting started at 1:03 p.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 5/4/20 RAAC Meeting

The minutes were circulated electronically prior to the meeting. No amendments were offered. Ellen Zavala moved that the minutes be adopted and placed on file as submitted, seconded by Lesley Brown; the motion passed without objection.

Unfinished Business

1. Tiger Team Update: Pre- and Post-award Plan

Shanda Wirt asked if the plan could be distributed to the faculty and deans; Dr. Tankersley said that although these are internal working documents he did not object to them being shared. He noted that they are considered to be “living” documents that can be continuously revisited during COVID-19 operation.

2. Revision of Policy 50.5/Compliance with UG 200.466 (Update)

This policy addresses graduate student stipends and support. Dr. Tankersley was to meet with Dean Reynolds later in the day on June 1 to map out next steps. Dr. Tankersley shared enrollment data, broken down by department, for the Fall semester of 2019 showing how many graduate students were supported on extramural grants in that semester. The initial phase of implementing the changes to this policy will primarily affect the departments that Dr. Tankersley highlighted in the presentation; this will account for about 60% of all graduate students who are supported on research grants. In the future (probably over the course of the coming academic year), students on other departments will also be covered by the revised policy. Dr. Tankersley hopes to have this first phase implemented by Fall of 2020 and he hopes to have an update available for next month’s RAAC meeting. Peter Szanton asked if the research administrators should be doing anything different in the meantime and Dr. Tankersley said for them to continue following their current practices. Very little tuition support will be provided over the summer.

3. Training Grant Policies/Procedures Update

Mr. Szanton noted that there was nothing to update at this time.

4. Update: Research Restart and Restoration Task Force Report and Plan Template

The task force submitted their report and a webinar was held about ten days previously. Recommendations from the task force were reviewed at the departmental level and higher. Dr. Tankersley reported that Academic Affairs had received about 25 proposals that had been reviewed by the Provost and were expected to be approved by the policy group. Dr. Tankersley asked those in the RAAC meeting who were serving as the “gatekeepers” in their departments if there were any materials that could be provided to make the approval process move more smoothly; no one made any suggestions. Anyone currently working under an exemption needs to have any extensions approved by the Academic Affairs policy group; such requests should be submitted by June 10. Dr. Tankersley asked if any clarifications were needed or would help; Angelica Martins said that she had heard that a faculty member had made a plan ten days ago and had not received an answer; Dr. Tankersley said that this plan had been reviewed by Academic Affairs and was among about thirty such plans currently awaiting approval from the policy group. Mr. Szanton noted that some faculty currently awaiting work were concerned about having to make multiple submissions before they were approved. Dr. Tankersley noted that several proposals had to be returned to the departments for additional information. On Friday Mr. Szanton received a request from a researcher to return to campus to perform some analysis and Mr. Szanton inquired about the quantity of such requests as he believes that there could be a large number of them. Dr. Tankersley said that if the work cannot be done remotely then he would encourage the researchers to request exemptions to return to campus. He noted that the campus itself is not ready for an influx of people to return.

5. Update: Processing Summer Contracts for Faculty and Students

Dr. Tankersley thanked everyone, especially the GCA team, for processing contracts in mid-May to meet the payroll deadline by Friday, May 29. Over 300 contracts were submitted and about 250 were processed. Dr. Tankersley noted that this is an ongoing matter with changes being made to administrative leave which could affect many of the contracts. Changes in University and UNC System policies could require that changes be made to how contracts are handled. Dr. Tankersley asked for any questions about moving forward under our current guidance, especially given the updated information provided about leave by HR in the previous week. No one voiced any concerns. Valerie Crickard noted that there have been no electronic personnel action forms in her queue, so reviewers are approving them on a daily basis.

New Business

1. Subrecipient Commitment Forms

Prior to the start of the meeting Ellen Zavala circulated two documents: the Subrecipient Commitment Form for FDP Institutions and the Subrecipient Commitment Form for Non-FDP Institutions. The 5 page form has been around for some time and has been used for any FDP institution; Lesley Brown had informed Ms. Zavala that one contract required ten subcontracts for which the shorter form could have been used. Working with Nikki Simmons, Ms. Zavala and Ms. Brown approved the shorter form. The shorter form is now available electronically in pdf format. Vicki Cherwon requested that the RAAC members be provided with a link to the shorter form. Dr. Tankersley asked if the shorter form could be used now and Ms. Zavala confirmed that they could be used now.

2. Minimum PI Effort Level on Proposals

This topic has come up in various ways over the years. Mr. Szanton asked whether the university should encourage or require that a minimum PI effort be listed on proposals. Many funders require that a minimum effort by the PI's be specified, but some PI's insist on not including any indication of their level of effort on the proposals. Mr. Szanton asked if some minimum level of effort should be specified on proposals. Ms. Brown noted that several years ago a draft policy had been proposed but it was not approved by the Office of Legal Affairs; the then-head of GCA (Steve Selby) did not propose it again. Vikki Cherwon noted that small grants do not always allow for the inclusion of salaries, so any formal policy should make allowance for exceptions. Dr. Tankersley noted that if a faculty member is committing to a project then there should be some indication of the amount of effort that the faculty member would make and that there should be an indication of where the

effort would take place so that the appropriate F&A rate could be determined. Dr. Tankersley indicated that some guidance should be provided as to when 0% effort would be acceptable and asked how frequently this question arises. Mr. Szanton noted that in CLAS the question comes up fairly frequently when people apply for small awards; the number is probably at least 20% of all proposals from CLAS. Faculty want to keep their budget down in order to increase the likelihood of being funded. Ms. Crickard asked who is tracking the uncharged commitment of faculty time as voluntary committed cost share because this question would come up during an audit; Mr. Szanton said that it is not currently being formally tracked. Ms. Wirt also noted that a number of faculty in the College of Engineering do not want to budget any of their own effort and that her office encourages the faculty to charge for some level of effort in order to avoid issues with voluntary cost share commitment; she says that this occurs at least half a dozen times each year. Dr. Tankersley asked Audrey Callahan if this comes up in CCI and Ms Callahan responded that in her 18 months in the position she had not seen it; instead, she sees difficulties with people overcommitting the amounts of their effort. Dr. Tankersley asked that Ms. Wirt and Mr. Szanton investigate how other institutions handle these situations and that they report on this topic at the next RAAC meeting.

3. Change in Fund Range for BD606 Awards

For anyone receiving BD606 awards, the fund numbers had to be changed. The grant number range will be 558.

4. Conflict of Interest Approvals on Proposals

Leslie Jenkins is seeing more situations where Conflicts of Interest are not resolved at the proposal stage; these issues are supposed to be resolved before the proposal is submitted. Per Nikki Simmons, this is particularly the case for consultants and graduate students and could be the case for subcontractors who do not have their own Col policies. For many of these situations there has been no Col information submitted by the individuals; since this information is required this absence of information slows down the submission. For graduate students this work is often delayed because the specific students who will work on a project are not identified at the time of submission. Ms. Crickard has asked Ms. Jenkins to document these situations so as to provide some idea of the magnitude of the problem. Ms. Zavala said that all that was required at the time of submission was that the financial interests be disclosed, not that they be reviewed and approved. Ms. Crickard wants this question to be resolved quickly so that contracts are not delayed. Dr. Tankersley asked if InfoEd could help with this, and Ms. Martins said that the problem is that only individuals who have been identified as being responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research are required to make financial disclosures, so the Conflict of Interest office depends on the PI's identifying the "responsible" individuals; the implementation of the InfoEd Col module will not speed things up unless the PI's enter that information in a timely manner.

The meeting ended at 1:58 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II