

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)
1 p.m. on Monday, June 7, 2021
via Zoom

Present:

Jeremy Alajajian	Stafford Farmer	Nikki Simmons
Darlene Booker	Rachel Ladenheim	Peter Szanton
Lesley Brown	Stacy Leotta	Mary Welsh
Audrey Callahan	Sherry Loyd	Ellen Zavala
Vikki Cherwon	Angelica Martins	
Valerie Crickard	Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza	
Paul Cryer	April Schenck	

Absent:

Elaine Jacobs	Carl Mahler	Shanda Wirt
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Guest:

Laura Williams

The meeting began at 1:01

Meeting Opening:

Approval of meeting minutes for 5/3/21 RAAC meeting

Angelica Martins moved to approve the minutes as submitted, which motion was seconded by Lesley Brown and approved without objection.

Old Business:

I. Human Subject Incentives

Controller Laura Williams introduced herself to the Committee and participated in a discussion of the guidance document on how to pay incentives to human subjects who participate in IRB-approved research. This had been a topic at the March 2020 RAAC meeting but the review of that document was suspended due to the Covid pandemic. Peter Szanton gave a short overview of the document focusing on several significant changes from earlier versions. Payments are now allowable to participants out of petty cash in amounts up to \$100 per person per study rather than the \$25 per person per study limit in a previous version. The total amount of petty cash funds that can be used has increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000. These changes reflect the results of a review of the practices of twenty five other research universities with these limits being near the middle of the ranges of compensation allowed at those universities. Another change is that in an earlier version, any money provided to human research subjects would be paid from departmental petty cash funds; under the current document, unique petty cash funds must be established for each research project in which the human subjects receive cash incentives. Another change pertains to recipient classification and tax reporting requirements. If the subjects are UNC Charlotte faculty, staff, or students who have been actively recruited, such as by emails to UNC Charlotte personnel, then any incentives that they receive are considered taxable and this income must be reported to the tax office. In contrast, if a target study population is not specifically directed at UNC Charlotte

employees then identifying participants who happen to be UNC Charlotte employees or students is not required and the income is not required to be reported to the tax office. Ms. Williams then reviewed two flow charts, one of which showed the legal requirements for tracking the human subjects and the other which showed the tax reporting requirements. She also noted that since March of 2020 the University has made efforts to reduce the number of petty cash funds on campus; there are currently only three petty cash funds on campus, but if research projects involve cash incentives then an additional petty cash fund must be established for each such project. Dr. Tankersley asked how cash incentives were handled international studies involving foreign nationals who might not have social security numbers, taxpayer identification, or potentially even bank accounts. Ms. Williams responded that researchers would need, at a minimum, to record the first and last names of the individual receiving cash and the amount given to them but that tax reporting for money that was given to individuals in a foreign country was not particularly important so long as the amounts provided were limited to \$100.00.

Valerie Crickard noted that petty cash funds usually have a maximum balance of \$5,000 and that requests of over \$5,000 must be approved by both Vice Chancellor Tankersley and Controller Williams and asked if there were additional requirements needed to be added to the guidance document for such situations. Dr. Tankersley responded that he felt the current wording of the guidance document was sufficient for these situations. Stacy Leotta mentioned that in her area the incentives provided to human subjects were often gift cards and asked if specific funds needed to be established for them. Ms. Williams responded that funds only had to be established for actual cash, not for gift cards. Ms. Crickard noted that gift cards should not be pre-purchased using any research award money; instead, the gift cards should be charged off to a non-research fund and then reallocated as those gift cards were used. This is because awards are not allowed to be used for any sort of financial advances.

Lesley Brown moved to approve the guidance document, which motion was seconded by Vikki Cherwon and was approved without opposition.

II. Guidance Documentation and Communication Plan for Upcoming Changes to NIH Proposals

Ms. Zavala reported that she, Mr. Cryer, and Ms. Cherwon had put together a document to be used for disseminating information about these changes across campus. The changes in requirements to NIH proposals go into effect in late January of 2022. Ms. Zavala committed to distributing the document to the various departments and encouraged the RAAC members to distribute it within their colleges. She also noted that earlier in the day she and Ms. Cherwon had made their first system-to-system proposal submission to NIH and while they encountered some errors, the proposal was successfully submitted.

III. Year Over Year Tuition Escalation on Grant proposals

This item was tabled until the July RAAC meeting.

IV. Award Budgets in NORM/Niner Research

Niner Research has been the system of record for submission for nearly a month. Conversion of information from NORM into Niner Research will probably require another six weeks to two months. In the meantime, information regarding new awards must be entered manually as the new awards are received. Ms. Crickard reported that the account codes being used in Niner

Research are not consistent with what is needed for Banner; for instance, Niner Research currently only uses one account code for all faculty salary rather than separate codes for summer salary or release time. As a result the budget template that was design previously must be used and uploaded for every award received. If the amount of the award is different from what was submitted then the proposal submitter must provide an updated budget using the budget template. The goal ultimately is to have the account codes upload directly from Niner Research into Banner, but because the account codes in Niner Research are not accurate at this time the manual procedure must be used.

Mr. Szanton noted that he had not been using the budget template for small proposals with very simple budgets and he asked if he now needed to go back and include the budget templates for all proposals; Dr. Tankersley replied that because of the errors in account codes it was critical to provide budgets using the budget templates for all proposals. Ms. Crickard is hopeful that the account codes can be corrected in Niner Research quickly so that the budget template will not be required for all future submissions. Dr. Tankersley noted that some of these situations would need to be resolved by InfoEd as enhancements within Niner Research.

Nikki Simmons noted that all proposals that were started in NORM and are now being entered as awards in Niner Research need to have all relevant attachments entered manually into Niner Research – the attachments are not being migrated automatically into Niner Research for awards that are received during this transition period. Peter Szanton asked whether the “red comments” on awards need to be manually entered into Niner Research as well and Ms. Simmons replied that yes, they must be entered into Niner Research; she believes that the appropriate place to enter them will be the comments box of the summary page of PT but she will confirm that this is accurate.

Ms. Simmons noted that administrators in the colleges have been proactive about manually entering awards into Niner Research, but she noted that in addition to doing this, the awards must be recorded on tracking sheets so that everyone knows that the data has been entered manually; failure to do this will result in duplicate records being created when the mass data migration takes place.

Dr. Tankersley will work with Ms. Crickard and Ms. Zavala to put together document informing people of all the steps that are needed for manually entering award information into Niner Research. He also noted that this increased burden is likely to delay the process for establishing funds for new awards received because of manpower demands.

V. Internal Proposals in Niner Research-Responsibilities at Pre- and Post-Award States
This discussion was tabled until the July RAAC meeting.

New Business:

VI. Release Time Forms and Subcontract Invoices transitioning to DocuSign

Ms. Crickard asked that execution of release time forms and subcontractor invoices be transitioned to DocuSign by July 1. DocuSign tracks the execution of documents and using it will help to identify and resolve slowdowns in execution of these documents. She asked that Darlene Booker be added as an “fyi” on every DocuSign document. Release time forms and subcontractor invoices are still handled as paper documents and using DocuSign will help move these to electronic recording. At Mr. Szanton’s request Ms. Crickard will send an email asking for this change to be made and giving

instructions on how to do so.

VII. PD budget template for entering budget in Banner
See section IV above

VIII. Final version of the Student Educational Payback Guidance

Ms. Crickard presented a guidance document that she had recently received regarding collections of training grants that are repayable to the grantor. Changes from the previous document were made in sections 4 and 5. Section 4 explains how remittances to the grantor are handled and section 5 pertains to GCA's involvement if the student defaults in repaying three monthly payments so that the account can subsequently be referred to the grantor. Ms. Crickard advised the RAAC members that these are legitimate, allowable expenses; if the expenses are removed from the grant, for example to a clearing fund so that the training funds could be made available to another student, then the University becomes liable for the deficit if the student who initially received the funds defaults in payments. Laura Williams noted that there are things that the researchers can do to reduce the University's financial risk, such as requiring the student to work directly with the grantor to return funds if the student turns out to not qualify for the grant.

Ms. Crickard moved that the payback guidance document be accepted in its current form, which motion was seconded by Mr. Szanton and approved without opposition.

Upcoming RAAC Meetings:

Dr. Tankersley announced that RAAC meetings will be held virtually for the indefinite future.

The meeting ended at 2:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II