

**RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)**

**1 p.m. on Thursday, August 19, 2021**

**via Zoom**

**Present:**

Jeremy Alajajian  
Darlene Booker  
Lesley Brown  
Audrey Callahan  
Paul Cryer  
Stafford Farmer

Elaine Jacobs  
Rachel Ladenheim  
Stacy Leotta  
Sherry Loyd  
Elizabeth Mace  
Carl Mahler

Angelica Martins  
Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza  
April Schenck  
Peter Szanton  
Shanda Wirt

**Absent:**

Vikki Cherwon  
Valerie Crickard

Nikki Simmons  
Mary Welsh

Ellen Zavala

**Meeting Opening:**

The meeting started at 3:00 PM.

I. Approval of meeting minutes for 7/12/21 RAAC meeting

Lesley Brown moved to approve the minutes as submitted, which motion was seconded by Darlene Booker and passed without objection.

**New Business:**

II. Internal Proposals in Niner Research - Responsibilities at Pre- and Post-Award States  
A document regarding handling of Faculty Research Grants ("FRG's") was circulated prior to the start of the meeting. Internal proposals will be subject to the 10-5-2 timeline. Peter Szanton reminded the group that it had been decided at an earlier meeting that internal grants would be routed through Niner Research. The document that was circulated contains recommendations as to how to accomplish this. In some years there are as many as 120 FRG proposals, although there were only 84 in Fall of 2020. Many people who apply for FRG's are unfamiliar with the grant proposal process and need additional support when preparing these applications. Text will be added to the FRG website to clarify how these awards will be managed. Dr. Tankersley asked if the current version of the budget template was adequate for FRG proposals or whether changes were needed. Per Lesley Brown there is little that can be changed in the Niner Research budget template but the FRG budgets are very simple; the Excel spreadsheet for external proposals is far more complicated than is needed for FRGs, so it need not be used for them. However, the internal Niner Research budget template must be used in order for reporting to work properly within Niner Research. Sherry Loyd asked if Niner Research would automatically flag proposals for which the PI's needed to fill out Conflict of Interest disclosures; it is not clear that everyone who applies for internal grants understands that they also need to report themselves as participating in research, and it is this self-identification as a "researcher" that triggers certain questions in the Col reporting module. Dr.

Tankersley asked that Ms. Loyd and Angelica Martins review the FRG submission process to ensure that potential Col disclosures are handled appropriately. Stacy Leotta asked whether a notification will be sent to notify faculty of the availability of FRG grants, and Ms. Brown responded that such a notification will be included in the Academic Affairs weekly announcements. Chairs and Deans are notified of faculty applying for internal grants but are not required to approve them. Shanda Wirt asked if it were possible to create a “template” IPF for internal grant proposals in Niner Research so that researchers who are unfamiliar with the Niner Research modules could simply copy that template for use as a starting point; Stafford Farmer noted that it would be necessary for such templates to be created for each faculty member because most faculty members only have access to their own records in Niner Research. Mr. Farmer stated that he would ask Chris Krumm if it is possible for such templates to be created for each faculty member.

### III. Policy 50.5 Student Signature

Dr. Tankersley reported that one of the requirements of Policy 50.5 is that students sign documents (to be kept on file) indicating their awareness and acceptance of their responsibilities when accepting awards. This is a step that must be taken at this time; it is probable that the process will be streamlined in the future so that the students’ acknowledgements of their responsibilities can be maintained electronically, but for the immediate future paper copies with original signatures must be retained. Dr. Tankersley noted that the RAAC members must continue to disseminate information from the RAAC meetings throughout their colleges in order to increase awareness across campus of changes in policies.

### IV. Niner Research Attachments and Attachment Naming

Mr. Szanton reported that a separate meeting will be scheduled to address the attachments that are needed for research proposals and how to name the digital files in order to make it easy to associate those files with the relevant proposals within Niner Research. This includes information about F&A waivers and other types of attachments. Naming conventions for the files will be developed; Ms. Brown noted that at one time there was a system of naming conventions and that she would try to find that information and circulate it to the RAAC members.

Dr. Tankersley gave a brief update on the status of implementation of Niner Research modules. All modules are on target to be implemented by the end of September and data conversion from NORM into Niner Research will be completed in that timeframe. Data conversion has required a particularly large amount of work. Many operations are going on in parallel right now to meet this timeline. Dr. Tankersley expects that there will be continual improvement of the modules once they have initially been implemented.

Sherry Loyd reported on some of the Research Protections modules. Modifications have been made to the Col module regarding travel and appointments and another page will be added to document certain types of travel, particularly foreign travel. Mary Tomida is working on the IRB module, which is already live, and the BioSafety module will go live in the near future. Darlene Booker reported on modules for awards and fund setups; implementation of these modules remains on target. The

Change Request module is nearly ready, with a bug currently being fixed for Assumptions of Risk. Angelica Martins reported that the Animal Care and Use module and Human Subjects Protections (IRB) module are live. The Biosafety module should go live by mid-September, once it has been approved by the Biosafety committee. Dr. Martins noted that it would be good to have researchers contact Ms. Loyd prior to submitting SBIR and STTR proposals; fund setup for such awards have been delayed in the past due to complications from Conflict of Interest concerns, and such delays can usually be avoided. Ms. Leotta noted that there is a checkbox that initiates pre-reviews for proposals that include “organizational Col’s” and a similar checkbox might be useful for STTRs and SBIRs.

Mr. Farmer noted that escalation rates for tuition, student health insurance, and other matters had been estimated at 2% per year. He noted that in contrast to those items, escalation of fringe benefits rates over the last eight or nine years had fluctuated significantly; he asked if the 2% figure should be used for fringe benefit rates or whether the current year’s changes should be used for projections of costs in future years. Dr. Tankersley asked Mr. Farmer and Mr. Szanton to work with Valerie Crickard to determine how to handle escalation of fringe benefit rates and communicate their decision and its rationale to the RAAC members.

The next meeting will be held on September 13.

The meeting ended at 3:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II