RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)
1 p.m. on Monday, August 3, 2020
via Zoom

Present:

Darlene Booker	Stacy Leotta
Denise Bradley-Fluellen	Sherry Loyd
Lesley Brown	Carl Mahler
Audrey Callahan	Angelica Martins
Vikki Cherwon	Nikki Simmons
Valerie Crickard	Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza
Paul Cryer	Peter Szanton
Stafford Farmer	Shanda Wirt
Elaine Jacobs	Ellen Zavala
Rachel Ladenheim	

Absent:

Jeremy Alajajian	Gail Keene
Marian Castle	Mary Welsh

The meeting started at 1:01 p.m.

Meeting Opening:

I. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for 7/6/20 RAAC Meeting**
Ellen Zavala requested a correction to the spelling of Lesley Brown's first name, which change was accepted. Lesley Brown moved to adopt the minutes as corrected, which motion was seconded by Angelica Martins and passed without opposition.

Old Business:

II. **Revision of Policy 50.5/Compliance with UG 200.466 Update**
Revisions to Policy 50.5 are still being made following discussions with several Department Chairs, but Dr. Tankersley does not expect any immediate changes from the current procedures as to how graduate students are supported for their work in sponsored research projects. Although the procedures will likely stay the same this academic year, the budgeting process for such support may yet change a bit; the focus going forward will be on new proposals and on contracts that become effective on or after the spring 2021 semester, and a deadline for complying with the revised budgeting process still needs to be established. The various colleges will be given time to bring their practices into alignment with the revised policy. The final wording of the policy will be vetted by various Deans, Associate Deans, and by senior administrators within the Graduate School and will then be routed through the RAAC before adoption. Lesley Brown asked if changes to budgeting for tuition and fees should be made at this time and Dr. Tankersley replied that the existing practice should be

followed for now in order to provide students who currently receive these types of support sufficient time to plan for changes.

III. **Training Awards Policy/Process**

Valerie Crickard reported that she had reached out to Brad Trahan in the Office of Legal Affairs and had received confirmation that the Training Awards Policy is an RED policy that does not require approval from other offices in the University. Repayment terms for training awards will not be changed without first obtaining approval from Mr. Trahan and from the Bursar (Eric Conklin). Once the policy and template agreement are finalized and approved Ms. Crickard will create a link to them on GCA's web site and send them out to all the colleges. Decisions have yet to be made as to how existing repayment programs will be grandfathered in. Peter Szanton noted that he already sent an earlier version of the template agreement out and it is currently being used by some programs in his college. He will send out the final version to his researchers when it becomes available. Dr. Tankersley asked what happens when a student fails to comply with the repayment agreement – is the faculty member liable for debts, or is it up to the college or department to pay them? Ms. Crickard answered that paying the debts was the responsibility of the college and/or department. Ms. Crickard did not know of any exceptions to the policy, and Ms. Brown concurred that there should be no exceptions since these are based on federal policies. Dr. Tankersley would like to bring all programs into compliance as soon as possible. Ms. Crickard said that this policy is in addition to any specific requirements imposed by sponsors. Denise Bradley-Fluellen asked if more than one document had to be signed by the student and Ms. Crickard replied that a student only needed to sign the agreement. Audrey Callahan asked who collects the money and Ms. Crickard replied that this responsibility should stay with the college, possibly with the relevant department. Shanda Wirt asked if signed agreement would be available via InfoEd with restricted access in the documentation for the proposal to which the agreement pertains. Carl Mahler checked into this after the meeting and found that agreements that are attachments to proposals will only be available to the PI's, to personnel named on the relevant proposal, to department heads and department administrators in the relevant departments, and to the individuals administering the relevant InfoEd module. Dr. Tankersley asked that any proposed revisions to the policy or to the agreement template be sent to Ms. Crickard as soon as possible.

IV. **Minimum Effort Policy for PIs**

Prior to the meeting a "Draft Policy for PI Minimum Effort on Federally Funded Awards" was circulated. Mr. Szanton noted that this draft may need to be revised if certain assumptions behind it are not correct. It is based on documents from other institutions pertaining to federally funded awards, and its coverage is limited to PI's and Co-PI's; one assumption behind this draft is that it will not apply to other key personnel. Another assumption is that only PI's recognized by the sponsor will be covered by the policy, even though it is possible that the institution may recognize additional PI's for the same project (this is why the term "sponsor recognized PI's" is used). A third assumption is that the award does not include any formal cost sharing; this assumption was made because of the University's policy not to allow cost share unless doing so is required by the sponsor. Some institutions apply this type of policy only to federal awards while other institutions apply such policies to all awards; the

circulated draft only applies to awards from federal sponsors. Mr. Szanton asked whether these assumptions should be changed. Ms. Brown believes that these assumptions are all appropriate, especially the assumption that the policy's application should be limited to federal awards – but she asked if this brought up a consistency issue. Ms. Crickard and Ms. Zavala also felt that the federal sponsors might want consistency in how the University treats PI effort requirements regardless of sponsorship. Mr. Szanton stated that some institutions only reference federal sponsors, but in practice might treat other sponsors the same way. Per Dr. Tankersley, the challenge is that some types of projects don't recognize Co-PI's or other PI's; if the policy is drafted so that it only applies to federal awards, it isn't clear whether it would be applied to other types of awards; he recommends that it be drafted so as to apply to all awards.

Vikki Cherwon asked if there should be exclusions under which exceptions to the policy would be allowed, and Dr. Tankersley suggested adding guidelines under which exceptions would be allowable. Ms. Bradley-Fluellen asked whether the minimum effort required applied to the entire budget period or if was an annual requirement, and Mr. Szanton replied that it currently could be interpreted either way and recommended that it be clarified in the document. Ms. Zavala asked about awards that specify a "maximum salary" – if the PI is over the salary cap for the sponsor, the University currently treats this overage as cost sharing.

Dr. Tankersley is taking the proposed policy under advisement and will bring it up at the next RAAC meeting to decide on whether to formally adopt it. He asked Mr. Szanton to develop formal language for exceptions in time for the September meeting. Dr. Tankersley also asked for a timeline for approval of waivers and exceptions to the policy, and Ms. Zavala pointed out that if we require a waiver we need to think about how to incorporate this into InfoEd.

New Business:

V.   Recommended Practice for Hiring/Reappointing Research Faculty

Prior to the meeting, a document titled "Draft of Recommended Practice for Hiring/Reappointing Research Faculty" was circulated. This topic was discussed at the July 6, 2020 RAAC meeting, during which Mr. Szanton, Ms. Callahan, and Mr. Alajajian were requested to investigate situations in which research faculty had been dropped from the University's payroll after "soft money" funding for them had disappeared. After discussing these situations with several research officers it was not clear that a formal policy was needed; rather, the document that was circulated is a recommended process. It addresses "backstops" for when unexpected events occur at either the college or department level so that individuals would be appointed for a specified period and not be dropped off of payroll if their funding disappears. It includes recommendations for the use of superseding PD7 forms for 9 month faculty. The recommendations require more documentation and paperwork than has been customary when research faculty are appointed, but they ensure that these faculty members remain in active status. Ms. Bradley-Fluellen noted that EHRA non-faculty are sometimes hired on soft money and asked if these practices would apply to those individuals as well as to research faculty. Mr. Szanton replied that the document was drafted with only research faculty in mind, but perhaps it could be extended to other individuals such as research staff. Ms. Crickard noted that not all research staff hires involve the use of PD7 forms. She recommended that the individual colleges establish clearing funds to support

individuals who are covered by the proposed process, but noted that the colleges would be responsible for reconciling those funds. It is not clear that Ms. Crickard's recommendation would be acceptable to all colleges, especially if the proposed process is extended to folks other than research faculty.

Dr. Tankersley asked the group who developed the proposed process to consult with unit- or college- level business officers before adopting it. He also asked if the proposed process should cover all grant-funded employees, such as technicians. He requested that Mr. Szanton add language to help determine what the recommended (but not required) practices should be for non-faculty individuals who are hired on soft money.

VI. **New Language for CRE Limited Submission Website**
Prior to the meeting, the following proposed language was circulated to the RAAC members:

"**Please note:** The Center for Research Excellence (CRE) makes every attempt to identify limited submission funding opportunities and provide information on them in a timely manner in order to coordinate the internal review and selection process. When researchers identify a limited submission program that has not been announced or does not appear on CRE's limited submission website, they should forward the program information immediately to their College-Based Research Officer and to Susan Robinson at ssrobins@uncc.edu."

A situation arose recently in in the College of Engineering in which this language would have been applicable. Multiple researchers applied to the Department of Energy for funding for which the faculty themselves could apply but for which the University could only submit one proposal. Ms .Brown emphasized that applying for awards that have "limited submissions" provisions is a shared responsibility – if faculty see a limit on the number of submissions, they should reach out to their College Based Research Officer or to Ms. Brown's office before submitting applications. Ms. Brown asked that the RAAC members emphasize this to their faculty. She noted that some universities act as gatekeepers with respect to these submissions, while others are adopting "first come first served" practices. Both she and Dr. Tankersley expect to see more of these limited submission announcements as funding that previously required the submission of pre-proposals are phased out and replaced with funding that only allow limited submissions.

The meeting ended at 1:54.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II