

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAC)
1 p.m. on Monday, September 7, 2020
via Zoom

Present:

Jeremy Alajajian	Stacy Leotta
Darlene Booker	Sherry Loyd
Denise Bradley-Fluellen	Carl Mahler
Audrey Callahan	Angelica Martins
Vikki Cherwon	Peter Szanton
Valerie Crickard	Shanda Wirt
Stafford Farmer	

Absent:

Lesley Brown	Rachel Ladenheim
Marian Castle	Nikki Simmons
Paul Cryer	Stephanie Sanchez-Esparragoza
Elaine Jacobs	Mary Welsh
Gail Keene	Ellen Zavala

The meeting started at 1:03 p.m.

Meeting Opening:

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes for 8/3/20 RAAC Meeting

The members of the committee accepted two changes that Carl Mahler proposed. Vicki Cherwon moved to adopt the minutes as corrected, which motion was seconded by Angelica Martins and passed without opposition.

Old Business:

II. Revised Agreement for Educational Expenses Paid by Training and Sponsored Awards

Prior to the meeting, a document titled "Policy 50.10: Student Agreement for Educational Expenses Paid on Training Awards" was circulated. Valerie Crickard requested that all members review the proposal; she expects that several of the colleges will make comments on the document, and she will solicit approval by the colleges prior to requesting that the RAAC approve the document at the October RAAC meeting.

III. Minimum Effort Policy for PIs: Final Review and Consideration

Prior to the meeting, Peter Szanton circulated a document titled "PI Minimum Effort DRAFT policy language_v6.docx." Major changes from the prior draft include 1) changing the policy to cover all sponsored research rather than research sponsored only by federal agencies; 2) adopting language for granting exceptions to this policy in a procedure similar to the one used for requesting waivers to the F&A policy (the procedure for requesting waivers will be a "pre-approval process" in Niner Research); and 3) adding language for "budgeted" committed

effort in the second section of the policy. Stacy Leotta noted that industrial agreements for lab tests sometimes only specify budgets for lab technicians and asked whether a supervising researcher or lab manager would be required to commit to a certain amount of budgeted effort. Mr. Szanton noted that as currently written the policy requires the PI to commit to a specific amount of budgeted effort but he noted that situations such as the one described by Ms. Leotta would be reasonable ones in which to ask for exceptions. Dr. Tankersley noted that one goal of the policy is to ensure that State funds are not being used to support salaries of people while they are working on sponsored research, so it would be appropriate to specify some level of effort from the supervisors on these types of projects; however, in some situations an exception might be granted. Mr. Szanton noted that the minimum level of effort is 1%, so for very small projects charging 1% of the supervisor's annual salary might be excessive. Mr. Szanton recommended giving faculty advance notice before implementing this policy and Dr. Tankersley agreed that some time should be allotted for educating faculty about it. Ms. Cherwon asked how uncompensated research faculty would be handled under this policy, and Dr. Tankersley replied that this would be an appropriate situation in which to apply for a waiver. Audrey Callahan asked whether this was a policy from RED or from the Office of Research Service & Outreach; Dr. Tankersley replied that it was the latter and that the policy should reflect this fact. Denise Bradley Fluellen asked whether this policy applies to the summer months rather than just to the academic year; the policy applies to all research regardless of whether it takes place in the summer months. Shanda Wirt moved to adopt the policy as amended, which motion was seconded by Stacy Leotta and was approved without dissent as new policy 20.4.

IV. Recommended Practice for Hiring/Reappointing Research Faculty: Final Review

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Szanton circulated a document titled "Recommended Practice – Research Faculty or Staff_rvsd.docx". It was recommended at the August 3, 2020 RAAC meeting that the document be modified so as to apply to research staff as well as to faculty and prior to the September meeting Mr. Szanton made the appropriate edits to provide this additional coverage. It was not clear whether this practice should become an official policy; Ms. Crickard said that it could be put on Canvas as a recommended practice. Carl Mahler noted that there could be a legal problem if similarly situated State employees were treated differently from one another so perhaps this should be an official policy applying to all research faculty and staff. Dr. Tankersley planned to check with the Office of Legal Affairs to determine if this would be advisable. Ms. Crickard moved that the recommended practice be adopted pending approval by the Office of Legal Affairs, which motion was seconded by Angelica Martins and was approved without objection.

V. Revision of Policy 50.5/Compliance with UG 200.466 Update

Dr. Tankersley had been unable to discuss the policy with the Associate Deans prior to the meeting so the topic was tabled until a subsequent RAAC meeting.

New Business:

VI. Continued Use of AIR for Proposal-Specific Disclosures until February 2021

Mr. Mahler reported that the Conflict of Interest module for the new “Niner Research” electronic Research Administration software (also known as InfoEd) was nearly complete and would be released to the campus in mid-September. The new Conflict of Interest module will eventually combine annual reporting, training, travel reporting for researchers supported by PHS grants, and requests for approval of External Professional Activities for Pay (“EPAP”) into one module, and will not require proposal-specific financial disclosures so long as the investigators certify that their most recent disclosure is still accurate and complete. Portions of the Grants module, including Proposal Development, Proposal Tracking, and Awards Tracking are scheduled to go on-line in February of 2021. Until that time, new proposals will continue to be submitted and tracked via our current NORM system. Due to the way NORM is configured, it cannot be used without also using the AIR conflict of interest module to make proposal-specific Conflict of Interest financial disclosures. Investigators will therefore need to continue using AIR when submitting new disclosures until the Niner Research Proposal Development module goes live in February. Mr. Szanton asked what will happen if someone submits a proposal in NORM; will the new training in provided within Niner Research satisfy the training requirements for NORM? If the investigator’s previous training certification in NORM has expired then the researcher will need to go through the training in AIR again in order to meet the requirements for NORM.

VII. Update on “Contract +” System

A new system called “Contracts Plus” will come online by the start of the new calendar year. Contracts under which the University will pay third parties will use this system, and so the research offices will need to learn how to use it for contractors. Information about it will be available on the OneIT web site. Use of the system will require training and Ms. Crickard wants to ensure that research officers are aware of it and obtain training as needed. GCA staff can guide people with questions to the correct office to find answers; use of the system is mandatory for the various departments. Ms. Crickard recommended that RAAC members let others in their colleges know that this new system is coming. The system is anticipated to be live in January, with training available in the October/November time frame.

VIII. Update on Policy 50.1 Allowable Costs

Policy 50.1 has been updated to address allowable costs that are incurred within the final 90 day time period of a budget period. Changes to the policy include modifications that were recommended by the Office of Legal Affairs. The revised policy can be found on the Research Administration Policies web page.

The meeting ended at 1:48 PM, mirabile dictu.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl P. B. Mahler, II