

University Research Council
Minutes of September 15, 2020 Meeting

Members Present: *Rob Rutenbar, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research; N. John Cooper, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research; Mark Lynn Anderson, Department of English; Karen Arndt, Department of Biological Sciences; Velpandi Ayyavoo, Graduate School of Public Health; Debbie Brake, School of Law; Ryan Champagne, Assistant Director for Research Development, Office of Sponsored Programs; Julie Fiez, Department of Psychology; Robert B. Gibbs, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences; Shelome Gooden, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research in the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Related Fields; Neil Hukriede, Department of Developmental Biology; William Layton, Department of Mathematics; Jeremy Levy, Department of Physics & Astronomy; Elizabeth Monasterios, Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures; Frits Pil, Katz Graduate School of Business; Anne Robertson, School of Engineering; Shilpa Sant, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences; Jeremy Somers, Office of Research, Health Sciences; Steven Stern, University of Pittsburgh Johnstown; Alexandre Vieira, School of Dental Medicine; Jennifer Woodward, Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs & Research Operations*

Members Absent: *Yvette Conley, School of Nursing; Heidi Ann Scharf Donovan, School of Nursing; William Dunn, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs; Shaun Eack, School of Social Work; Raymond Engel, School of Social Work; Brian Galla, School of Education; Kent Harries, School of Engineering; Alexandria Harris, Graduate and Professional Student Government Board; Stephen Hirtle, School of Computing and Information; Michael Holland, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Research Strategy; Holger Hooek, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, School of Arts and Sciences; Sean Kelly, School of Education; Matthew Kropf, University of Pittsburgh Bradford; Kacey Marra, School of Medicine; Margaret Rosenzweig, School of Nursing; Susan Sereika, Department of Health and Community Systems; Stephen Weber, Department of Chemistry;*

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Rob Rutenbar welcomed the Council members and called the meeting to order at 12:04pm.

2. April 21, 2020 URC Meeting Minutes

The April meeting minutes had been circulated to the Council and were approved *nem con*.

3. Research Restart

Dr. Rob Rutenbar stated that the restart begun on June 3rd seems to have gone well, noting that most laboratory-based research is now back up and running. Some areas that have to now deal with PPE where it was not used before the shutdown have taken a little longer, but things seem to be going well and moving along. Much research that does not require laboratories is being conducted remotely, as the University requested. He noted that the Oakland campus is still in “elevated” risk posture, but that the other campuses are at the “guarded” level.

4. Survey of Staff and Postdocs

Dr. John Cooper discussed several key outcomes of a survey that went out to about 1500 non-grad student research staff, with 59% of responses coming from staff and 41% from post-docs. These key outcomes were:

- COVID-19 website seems to be working well to inform people
- Most felt the restart went about as well as they expected
- There is concern regarding the ability to maintain appropriate social distance in areas outside of research space (hallways, elevators, dining facilities, etc.)
- There is also serious concern over risks associated with commuting to/from work

The survey was conducted about 3-4 weeks ago in collaboration with HR. It was noted that something similar was sent to grad students by the Provost, but that the response was very poor, with only about 17% responding.

5. MyDisclosures Pilot Year Outcomes

Dr. Cooper reported that every unit on all campuses ultimately opted into the MyDisclosures pilot this year. He reminded Council that the traditional April 15 deadline was pushed back to July 15, with roll out to the users taking place in mid-June. He reported that disclosures were received from 98% of those identified as needing to disclose – over 10,000 people – and that most of the missing disclosures were for people who had left the University or changed to a non-reporting status. Only 1% of disclosers made substantive disclosures and are still waiting for review by their supervisors. There have been some glitches with review of disclosures that report that there is nothing to disclose, and the COI team is looking at those problems and also at what can be improved for next year. Dr. Rutenbar stated that it seems to be an overwhelming success, with most people noting that the process was actually very easy. Dr. Jennifer Woodward noted that MyDisclosures will be integrated into PERIS MyFunding this Fall and Winter. Dr. Cooper added that the COI Office will look at responses and see if there are matters

that need to be clearer and possibly prompt responders with questions that will lead them to understand better what needs to be disclosed. There was a clarification that graduate students only need to disclose if they've been identified by the PI as an "investigator" under the PHS definition.

6. Update on IP Policy

Dr. Rutenbar discussed the progress being made on the new IP policy, noting that it was unanimously approved by the Senate Research Committee, but that concerns were expressed at Faculty Assembly regarding faculty ownership of course materials. Faculty are concerned that the University license to use faculty course materials under the policy could allow the University to exploit materials commercially without the faculty member's involvement/permission. The IP Committee is working to try to adjust the wording of several sentences to make things clearer and assuage concerns.

7. Proposed Bylaws for URC

Dr. Rutenbar discussed the different committees through which the SVCR connects to members of the University – the URC, the Faculty Senate Research Committee, and the Associate Deans for Research (ADR) Committee – and indicated that he is seeking to create a clear understanding of the unique role each of these committees serves. He stated that the URC is the ideal group to provide input on the selection of nominees for grant opportunities and honors for which the University is limited on the number of application/nominations that it can submit, because the URC is such a broadly based group of highly qualified faculty, staff, administrators, and students, each of whom can bring complementary perspectives to these matters. The URC will also continue to provide a faculty centered and exceptionally broad perspective on matters of policy. He intends to develop a membership of tenure and appointment-stream faculty with rolling terms, staff members, and student/trainee members.

The Senate Research Committee represents the Senate in formal reviews of new policies.

There was a question regarding how we see these committees playing into the University's direction. Dr. Rutenbar responded that both the URC and ADR Committee will help with the push for larger funding awards that involve multiple disciplines by establishing lateral connectivity.

There was a note that there should be someone from the Library on the URC. Dr. Rutenbar agreed and stated that he will solicit advice on who this should be.

8. Proposed Operating Guidelines for Committee of Associate Deans for Research

The operating guidelines for the Committee of ADRs were largely discussed under the previous item. Because the members are all *ex officio* and report to Deans, this committee is more operational in focus, with an emphasis on bilateral communication between the SVCR and the schools. Policy advice from this group will be complementary to that from the URC.

9. Planning for next Round of Momentum Funds and Selection of Committee Chairs

<https://upitt.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1822295>

Ryan Champagne discussed the Pitt Momentum Funds and noted that there has been approximately the same number of submissions to date as at this time last year. He stated that they will be reaching out to seed grant recipients to ask them to be reviewers this year and that they will need URC participation to connect the dots between reviewers and those needing review. He also noted that this year has seen more response from regional campuses and more higher-level social science proposals.

10. Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:13 pm.