

University Senate Research Committee Meeting  
22 November 2019

1:00 PM

826 CL

In Attendance: M. Chirimuuta, D. Harrell, G. Huber, R. Melhem, P. Morel, R. Rutenbar, A. Sethi, P. Smolinski, B. Yates

The minutes of the 27 September 2019 meeting were accepted as standing.

Charles Koch Foundation Grant

The committee was contacted by M. Chirimuuta prior to the meeting and asked if oversight of externally funded centers could be discussed. She was invited to the meeting and described a grant from the Koch Foundation that is going to support a new Center for Governance and Markets in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). The concerns that she raised were about who was going to be monitoring the research output of this Center to ensure academic integrity. There have been notable examples at other universities where the Koch Foundation had undue influence on the hiring and firing of faculty working in Centers supported by them. In addition, a recent report suggested that work coming from a Koch Foundation supported Center at GW University was presenting minority views that agreed with Koch industry interests, suggesting that this company was using academia to further its own interests. This has led to concerns among faculty at GSPIA who are not involved in the Center, as well as other faculty, about who will provide academic oversight over the Center.

It was noted that the [contract](#) between the University of Pittsburgh and the Charles Koch Foundation is publically available. It is clear from this contract that the Koch Foundation will not have any say in faculty hiring. Fifteen faculty, from diverse schools, are part of this Center, which will fund graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to study “the impact of political institutions, markets, and technology on human prosperity and well-being in the United States and around the world”.

R. Rutenbar stated there are over 220 centers at the University of Pittsburgh, and while four report directly to the Provost, the others report to a Dean or the Department Head. Academic oversight is provided first by the Dean or Department Head and then along University reporting lines as necessary. No specific measures have been set up to provide additional oversight for this Center as the administration feels that the contract provides sufficient academic freedom, and that it was adequately vetted. R. Rutenbar stated that the Provost and other members of the administration will be making a presentation at Faculty Assembly on December 3<sup>rd</sup> on contract vetting and further debate will be forthcoming on this issue.

There was a general and lively discussion that different views on a subject can be expressed in the University and that academic oversight should be maintained through the usual lines of communication unless there is some indication to do otherwise. No real consensus was achieved but several suggestions were made, including encouraging the Center to appoint an external advisory board.

#### Discussion of new COI web-based form

R. Rutenbar stated that the new COI web-based form is being beta-tested by several groups and a demonstration of the system will be provided at the December meeting of the Research Committee. The COI form will be launched in pilot form to a few centers in order to obtain more feedback and the finalized form should be used for the April 2021 COI declarations.

#### Update on Intellectual Policy

P. Morel reported that the Committee on Intellectual Policy has developed the guiding principles for intellectual policy which have been approved by the SVC of Research and the Chancellor. The committee is meeting every week and hopes to have its work completed early in the New Year.

D. Salcido submitted a question regarding whether the drone policy applies to the meal delivery robots on campus. He stated that the robots may be recording and taking video of people on campus. R. Rutenbar responded that the drone policy only applies to flying vehicles and the robots are being provided by a third party vendor with a contract to the University.

It was determined that the next meeting of the Committee will be moved from December 20 to December 13.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.

The next meeting will be **December 13, 2019 in CL 856 from 1:30 -3:30 pm. Please note change of time and room.**

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and P. Smolinski

## Appendix A – Intellectual Property Guiding Principles

### Guiding Principles: IP Policy

The University of Pittsburgh seeks to advance the frontiers of knowledge, to better the world through collaborative approaches that focus on greater societal need, and to promote economic development. This policy reinforces the University's mission by supporting and encouraging the University community in its creation, pursuit, and sharing of knowledge. Knowledge takes many forms, including works of art and authorship, discoveries, inventions, and tangible property. This policy is intended to nurture a culture and infrastructure that promotes the positive impact of knowledge on public well-being through open academic exchange and dissemination including, but not limited to, commercial development.

To achieve these purposes, this policy will be guided by the following principles: (1) protecting academic freedom to preserve and advance the educational mission of the University; (2) promoting the dissemination of creative and scholarly works, discoveries, and inventions; (3) encouraging, incentivizing, and recognizing innovators, creators, and the campus community to support the creation and further development of knowledge; and (4) adapting to new, changing, and diverse ways in which knowledge and discoveries continue to be made.