University Senate Research Committee Meeting
13 December 2019

1:30 PM

826 CL

In Attendance: C. Bonneau, J. Cooper, A. Crunk, D. DeAlmeida, D. Harrell, G. Huber, M. McCall, P. Morel, D. Salcido, P. Smolinski, W. Yates and J. Woodward

The minutes of the 22 November 2019 meeting were accepted as standing.

J. Woodward gave information on a new electronic system for requesting an indirect cost waiver. Currently the system is paper based and the goal is to make it electronic. A waiver needs to be requested for grants from sponsors who have no published policy on providing indirect costs to the University. For grants with direct costs of less than $50k the waiver would be approved by the Dean, otherwise the waiver will need to be approved by the Dean and the Senior Vice-Chancellor for Research. The waiver needs to be in place at the time of grant submission, to avoid potential problems if the grant is awarded without an agreement on indirect costs. Waivers are not required for Foundations with published indirect cost rates. The plan is to implement this system in the new year after testing.

J. Cooper provided an introduction to the new electronic conflict of interest (COI) disclosure system. He stated that the formulation of a new COI policy in May of 2018 provide the opportunity to convert the paper system into a total electronic format that could be more user friendly. A committee was convened that reviewed prototype version of the system and to determined which personnel would be required to submit the disclosure. The new system has been undergoing testing by group of 41 selected people and will be presented to the Council of Deans next week. The plan is to roll out the system in the new year for pilot testing by selected groups while the existing system remains active.

W. Yates provide an online demonstration of the system which is on a development server. He stated there will be training sessions and instructional videos once the system is rolled out. The same form will be used by both UPMC and Pitt employees. There are multiple "branch points" such that individuals with no conflicts will be able to fill out the form quickly, as is the case now. A new feature will be a request to provide an estimate of how many days/per year particular activities are undertaken, so that conflict of commitment can be assessed. Individual activities will be complied in a table that can be readily viewed by the supervisor. There will be no requirement to disclose activities that are part of normal academic work, such as reviewing papers and service on study section. The completed forms will be forwarded to the immediate

supervisor, who will have the responsibility to either approve or to require additional information and potentially initiate a COI plan.

There was a question on what "researchers" would need to submit the form. It was stated that the form would be mandatory for post-doctoral researchers but not mandatory for graduate and undergraduate researchers. It may be the case that some supervisors may request that certain graduate or undergraduate students submit the form. Staff and student disclosures will go to the PI. Anyone with a Pitt computer account would be able to submit the form. FAQs will be provided with the system.

It was asked if part-time or adjunct faculty will need to submit the form. J. Cooper stated that titles mean different things in different schools and would vary by school.

D. Salcido asked who would have access to the database and under what circumstances would outside entities would have access. J. Cooper said that access would be similar to that of the current system. There was no assurance given that information collected in these forms would not be given to outside parties who make formal requests for such information.

It was asked if it would be possible to set up an account so that individuals could try the system. W. Yates said there are a limited number of licenses for the system but that this may be possible.

M. McCall said the School of Nursing would be holding special training for Post-Docs.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and P. Smolinski