

University Senate Research Committee Meeting (online)  
14 August 2020

1:00 PM

In Attendance: A. Crunk, D. Harrell, M. Holland, G. Huber, M. McCall, P. Morel, E. Oyler, R. Rutenbar, D. Salcido, S. Sant, M. Scott, P. Smolinski, V. So, A. Stephany and W. Yates

The minutes from the 24 July 2020 meeting stand as approved.

Concerning the Research Restart:

*Self-Attestation form*

P. Morel stated that she has received an email regarding a new self-attestation form and asked whether this took the place of previous restart plan requirements that were put in place at the Department and school level.

W. Yates said that the many emails received about the research restart process are confusing, and it is not clear what the new requirements are.

M. Holland stated that the new University policy regarding self-attestation overrides all previous policy. Thus, everyone coming to campus must fill out the self-attestation form. Other forms may be retained such as those important for contact tracing.

*Training*

S. Sant said it is not clear if people who took the previous training must do retraining. M. Scott also asked if retraining must be done. Communication from Schools has not been uniform. M. Holland stated that all personnel need to retake the training. Supervisors need to take additional training.

*Operating Postures*

R. Rutenbar said that the Boston Consulting Group was retained to make everything consistent across the University. New University operational postures have been developed that are separate from the State and County postures. The University is also developing “everybody” guidelines. All new University rules and guidelines will supersede previous policies. At present the Oakland campus is in “elevated posture”

M. Scott said that better communications are needed to get this information out.

M. Holland stated that there is a new version of the University Covid website that contains all guidelines and virus information. The link is <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>

*Undergraduate research.*

P. Morel asked if undergraduate students can now be approved to do research.

R. Rutenbar said there are new University guidelines for the start of the term and that students cannot be compelled to do on site research. Students can be paid researchers and do research for course credit. Volunteers fall into the visitor and guest guidelines.

### *Covid testing:*

M. Holland stated that last week there was a dry run of the student virus testing process using staff. Students will be arriving on a staged basis.

M. Scott asked who will be tested.

M. Holland replied that the Health Care Advisory Group had developed a randomized, pooled testing plan for students. For the student pool testing that has been done to date there has been a 95% participation rate.

P. Morel asked if the test results are promptly available.

H. Holland said that in the testing that has been done there has been a 24-48 hour results time from UPMC.

M. Scott asked if the results will be available to the public.

R. Rutenbar that the web page will contain covid updates and campus results.

P. Morel said there are many web pages and pointed out that it will be important to make sure messaging is consistent across all of the available websites.

A. Crunk asked if there is any plan to test faculty and staff in research facilities.

M. Holland said that there is no plan for this. Only for symptomatic personnel.

M. Scott stated that in UPMC patient testing, the prevalence of covid was found to be low.

P. Morel asked if there is any plan for randomized faculty and staff testing, or is this only for students.

R. Rutenbar said no. He stated that in return to research here and at other universities has not led to spikes in the virus. Spikes have occurred when bars have reopened, suggesting that the workplace has been well-managed. Currently, students are a demographic that is seeing increasing rates of virus.

M. Scott said that the safety of public transit is a concern of post-Docs. A Crunk concurred especially as parking is now being limited and buses may be filling up with students.

### *Community Compact*

S. Sant raised the issue of the "Community Compact" that is to be signed by all students and personnel. She asked where it could be found and whether there would be a formal acknowledgement of signature

P. Morel stated that, in her case, the Community Compact agreement appeared when she logged into her my.pitt University account and that approval was required to enter the account.

M. Holland replied that this agreement will appear once and require approval. Signing this compact indicates that the person has read the compact, which outlines measures to be taken by personnel to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. It is not a pledge.

D. Salcido said that a communication from the Provost used the words "take this pledge" versus acknowledging that you had read the material, which may create some confusion.

### *Standards and Guidelines*

M. Holland said that the policy.pitt.edu website has covid related information on standards & guidelines, meeting events and travel, campus guests and academic visitors, research operations

and much more. It can be accessed on the <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/> web page by clicking on “Standards and Guidelines”. Details on the research related guidelines will be posted in the next week.

#### Concerning intellectual property (IP) Policy:

P. Morel stated that the draft IP policy was presented to the Faculty Assembly last week but it was not approved due to concerns related to the policy on course materials. There were objections to the wording of the University’s right to use course materials. She does not anticipate that the Research Committee will have any further work on the policy. The Faculty Affairs committee, led by Irene Frieze, was charged with examining this issue and coming up with more acceptable language. It is hoped that the IP policy can be approved by the October meeting of Faculty Assembly.

R. Rutenbar said that 95% of the policy is good, but there is more consideration needed for the wording of the policy related to course materials. There are meetings planned between the University Senate Faculty Affairs Committee and Lu-In Wang Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

#### Concerning the Committee diversity plan:

D. Salcido stated that the Committee should have a deliverable report. The report could include developing plans, mentorships, best practices, surveys of University data and efforts in diversity in research. The scope of diversity planning can include: diversity, social justice and systemic racism.

A. Crunk said that data on disability, race and sex should be included.

R. Rutenbar stated that there are efforts underway at the University to demographic data on research. This can be a sensitive issue in that the data may not be able to be deidentified.

D. Salcido said that at this point the goal may not be able to solve problems but to have discussions on ways to proceed.

P. Morel said that she was aware of several programs in the SOM that are aimed at providing opportunities for trainees who are under-represented in research and medicine. It is important to collect data on what the diversity in the research area is, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity. This includes students, trainees and faculty members. In addition the committee could identify and tabulate the programs, already existing across campus, that are aimed at increasing diversity in the research enterprise.

E. Olyer said that arts and sciences may have diversity data related to research somewhere.

D. Salcido mentioned that the inability to find data is in itself a finding.

R. Rutenbar said queries of the research awards system may yield information. In particular, it may be possible to identify the number of diversity F31 grants as well as diversity supplements to NIH R01 grants

S. Sant said that she could develop a template for data to be collected.

Action Item: S. Sant to develop a template for information related to diversity in research

R. Rutenbar said that he meets with Deans of Research weekly and he can ask them for possible sources of information.

Concerning the conflict of interest form:

M. McCall asked if undergraduate students need to fill out the conflict of interest (COI) form

R. Rutenbar stated that only those people who are named on grant awards, or who have their own trainee fellowship, need to fill out the COI form. He said that between the University and UPMC 23,000 COI form submission requests have been sent and that the response rate has been about 90%.

Concerning visiting international research scholars:

M. Scott asked why the protocol for hiring visiting international research scholars had changed. She said she was told a job posting must now be made for these hires. This complicates the process as, in the past, these scholars could be readily appointed.

R. Rutenbar said that faculty affairs (Lu-in Wang) or human resources (Dave DeYoung) may have information on this. The University Center for International Studies may have information on visa status for international scholars.

Concerning the transition from Box

P. Smolinski asked if any Committee activity is needed on the transition from Box.

R. Rutenbar mentioned that the transition is one year away and that the Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee is looking into this. Michael Spring is the Chair of this committee and he described the rationale for the change at the recent Faculty Assembly meeting

M. Scott mentioned that uploading using the Microsoft OneDrive software, which would be the alternative is slow.

R. Rutenbar recommended that Mark Henderson be invited to a committee meeting to discuss University plans for IT related to research.

The committee agreed that this would be a good idea and it was tentatively suggested for the October meeting.

Action Item: Invite Mark Henderson and Michael Spring to a future Committee meeting.

It was agreed that the Committee will continue to meet on the last Friday of every month and the next Research Committee meeting will be 25 September at 1:00.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and P. Smolinski