

University Senate Research Committee Meeting

(online)

20 November 2020

1:00 PM

In Attendance: M. Hravnak, D. Harrell, M. Kenney, M. McCall, P. Morel, E. Oyler, R. Rutenbar, D. Salcido, S. Sant, A. Sethi, P. Smolinski, V. So, A. Stephany, W. Yates,

The minutes from the 26 October 2020 meeting stand as approved

Covid 19 update

R. Rutenbar gave an update on the situation and stated that the University is following state and county guidelines. The resiliency plans are in effects and the research is continuing under the elevated posture. It is not anticipated that there will be a need to shut down research in the future.

M Hravnak asked about the new guidelines concerning Tier 3 human subjects research since an email recently went out stating that these studies should now be performed remotely. R. Rutenbar responded that his office was in the process of putting out new guidance on this. Tier 3 research involves studies with no direct benefit to the participants, such as studies of healthy subjects. If a researcher s uncertain whether their study is tier 1, 2 or 3 they can contact the IRB for guidance. Tier 1 and 2 research may continue with in-person visits, but tier 3 should move to remote interactions.

Data management Discussion

P. Morel asked for an update on progress with data management and noted that the NIH has released new guidelines on data sharing. R. Rutenbar noted that these were straightforward and as expected. Essentially a data management plan will be required for grants over 500K/year. He also noted that the IT team is working on a system that will allow automatic transfer of data from Box to One drive, which should be ready in time for when the contract with Box expires. Researchers who are concerned about their data should contact the IT team. Individuals who are heavy users of Box for data storage are being contacted by IT in order to determine what the best options are for them.

P. Morel asked whether Google Drive was going to be an option, as Adam Hobaugh had described at the last meeting, but R. Rutenbar was not aware of this and said he would look into i.

Systemic Racism, Inequity and Justice initiative

P Morel shared some data that she had taken from the new website that contains a lot of data concerning gender and ethnic diversity across the University (<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/social-justice>). She focused on the SOM and S. Sant had also looked at the data from the School of Pharmacy. This website only contains data for faculty but it is extensive. The data from the SOM shows that ethnic minorities are not well represented in tenured faculty (2% African American). In addition, while women represent 45% of appointment stream faculty, only 25% of tenured professors are women. These trends

have been stable for 10 years, with no apparent improvement. The School of Pharmacy showed similar trends.

M. McCall raised the question as to how the committee should use these data, since different schools may have unique situations. There was some discussion of this topic and one suggestion is that the committee identify units who have shown improvements in the hiring and retention of women and minority faculty. These could then be interviewed to determine what mechanisms these units used to improve in these areas.

ACTION ITEM: All committee members should take a look at the data from their own schools with the aim of identifying units with a good, or improving, record of diversity and equity.

P. Morel made the suggestion that the research committee might want to sponsor the viewing of a new movie called Picture a Scientist (<https://www.pictureascientist.com/>). This movie highlights the difficulties faced by three successful women scientists as they start and maintain their careers in science. This is a powerful movie and it is possible to arrange screenings along with a panel discussion. There was enthusiasm for this idea and D. Salcido suggested that it could be timed to coincide with the Senate Plenary in the Spring. Since there will be some costs involved R. Rutenbar stated that his office would be willing to pay a third, and D. Salcido thought the Senate would also be able to contribute. It was agreed that P Morel would request a screening from the film makers.

The next Research Committee meeting will be on 18 December at 9:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and S. Sant