

## **University Senate Research Committee Meeting**

(online)

18 December 2020

9:00 AM

In Attendance: A. Crunk, D. Harrell, M. Hravnak, M. Holland, M. McCall, P. Morel, E. Oyler, R. Rutenbar, D. Salcido, L. Rodzicz, S. Sant, M. Scott, A. Sethi, P. Smolinski, V. So, W. Yates,

The minutes from the 20 November 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. There have been no cases of infection among research personnel, suggesting that people are following the guidelines. He also noted that the Tier 3 human subjects research, which had been paused, can now continue under newly published guidelines.

P Morel asked about testing for asymptomatic individuals who may have been in contact with an infected person. It had come to her attention that employee health was not offering tests to such individuals. B Yates responded that in such cases quarantine and self-isolation is the best approach as a negative test may not be informative.

A Crunk asked whether there was a policy concerning individuals who may harbor virus for many weeks. R Rutenbar noted that there was no specific policy, but that the Covid Medical response Office (CMRO) is the one providing guidance on such issues.

M Scott asked if all vaccines for COVID would be administered via UPMC or did Pitt have a plan to deliver vaccines. R Rutenbar did not know the answer but noted that UPMC has the Pfizer vaccine and that the rules for distribution priority are set by CDC and the FDA. M Holland said that he would inquire whether Pitt has additional plans and M Scott responded that it was important to understand what plans are in place for everyone.

### Data management Discussion

R Rutenbar reported that the Pitt IT team was working on messaging concerning an automatic tool that will allow automatic migration of data files from Box to other storage apps. The options are OneDrive and Google Drive. He noted that this should be sufficient for most users. The IT team is working with the top 50 researchers, in terms of data storage, to optimize transfer for them. S Sant asked if there was a storage limit on OneDrive. R Rutenbar said that he did not know.

M Scott noted that OneDrive is very slow for uploads and also that the syncing across platforms is slow. R Rutenbar suggested people could consider Google Docs, which works well with multiple people.

L Rodzicz noted that a great deal of Department business has been conducted on Box, allowing for sharing between faculty, administrators and the OSP. R Rutenbar said that these issues should be raised with Pitt IT

#### Systemic Racism, Inequity and Justice initiative

There was some discussion about the data available on the social justice website (<https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/social-justice>). Some inaccuracies in the data were found for some schools, Nursing in particular was missing a department and the faculty numbers were not accurate. It was agreed that it was unlikely that much can be gained from analyzing these data since they in many cases they indicate that proportions of URM and women have not changed over the past 10 years in most units.

Rather, the committee decided to focus on determining what programs exist at Pitt that focus on retention and mentoring of existing women and minority faculty. Along those lines it was decided that the committee would invite John M. Wallace, Jr., PhD Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development to attend an upcoming meeting, at which time we would ask him to present Pitt-wide initiatives aimed at increasing faculty diversity. P Morel also suggested inviting Sarah Gaffen, Department of Medicine and Immunology, as she runs a mentoring program for junior faculty.

Action Item: P Morel will invite John Wallace and Sarah Gaffen to attend an upcoming meeting.

P. Morel provided more information concerning the potential to sponsor the viewing of a new movie called Picture a Scientist (<https://www.pictureascientist.com/>). This will cost \$350 to have campus-wide viewing rights. The organizers can also arrange a virtual viewing as well as access to the film makers for a panel discussion. D Salcido suggested that the Senate Office could help with organizing a viewing of the movie and that it could occur in March to coincide with Plenary activities. There was a question concerning the honorarium for the panel members. P Morel said that she would find out what this was.

Follow up: The movie has been ordered by the Senate Office. The honoraria range from \$500-\$1000 and the Senate Office is willing to pay this cost. Once the purchase is completed, we will contact the film makers to arrange the panel and dates.

#### Other Business

P Smolinski asked if there was likely to be a change in the policies on foreign influence once the new administration is in power in January. R Rutenbar noted that there are likely to be changes, as the incoming administration may overturn various executive orders. However, foreign influence remains a concern and it is not yet clear what changes will be implemented.

M. Scott asked foreign influence was still a big problem. R Rutenbar said that it does remain a big problem, as the latest hacking by the Russians illustrated. Pitt was not affected by this event but the NIH was.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am. The next Research Committee meeting will be on 29 January 2021 at 1:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and S. Sant

Happy New Year.