

University Senate Research Committee Meeting

(online)

30 April, 2021

1:00 PM

In Attendance: M. Holland, M. Levine, M. McCall, P. Morel, E. Oyler, L. Parker, L. Rodzicz D. Salcido, S. Sant, M. Scott, A. Sethi, W. Yates,

The minutes from the 26 March 2021 meeting stand were approved as submitted.

Presentation on the Research Ethics and Society Initiative (RESI) – Lisa Parker

Lisa Parker, Director of RESI, gave a presentation that describes the newly launched RESI initiative. The official announcement occurred on April 19 and the new [website](#) is now live. The RESI will provide a service to researchers who are interested in exploring ethical concerns raised by their research. Participation is voluntary and is not designed to supersede existing bodies such the IRB and IACUC that provide regulatory oversight. The services provided will include opportunities to consult with ethics experts in various fields, access to educational materials and course development. Dr. Parker's slides are provided.

Questions raised by committee members:

Morel: it seems that much of the focus is on research that involves human subjects, whereas there are many ethical issues that arise in research involving animals or other fields such as chemistry or engineering. Dr. Parker responded that there was a need to identify faculty working in those areas who have an interest and expertise in dealing with ethical issues. For the consultation service it is important to identify people who have some degree of experience in thinking about these issues.

Yates: few if any of the listed consultants have expertise in animal research and this is a concern.

Dr. Parker indicated that she would be willing to make presentations about RESI to departments around campus so that faculty can be made aware of what is available to them.

Research Report from Mike Holland (in the absence of Rob Rutenbar)

BioRender – Pitt license

Mark Henderson is in conversation with BioRender concerning the pricing of a campus-wide license for use of this program. There is no further information available concerning if and/or when such an agreement might be reached.

Covid 19 update

M. Holland reported that there are multiple discussions going forward on how Pitt will handle the fall return of students such as: will proof of vaccination be required?

S. Sant asked about an email that had circulated suggesting that all staff and faculty should return to campus by June 1, and whether this was a University policy

A. Stephany pointed out that it was likely that many administrators would continue to work from home, at least part of the time as it was found that productivity was maintained and that staff really liked the flexibility.

M. Holland noted that there is no overall requirement for faculty and staff to return too campus and that each department and unit should make its own assessment of the balance of how in-person versus work from home should be implemented across their unit.

Foreign influence update

B. Yates indicated that a new directive from NIH concerning other support was likely to be very divisive and cumbersome. This new [directive](#) requires that PIs and key personnel sign off electronically on their other support pages and also requires investigators to provide copies of all contracts concerning grants or employment from foreign institutions/organizations. Translations would have to be provided if the contracts were not in English. This was to have been instituted for the May deadline, but it has been extended to January 2022. There has been a lot of push-back on this as it is felt that it is an “over reach” by the NIH. Universities are complaining about this and it remains to be seen whether this will stand or not.

Picture a Scientist showing and panel discussion:

The panel discussion on April 8th concerning the Picture a Scientist movie was a success. Close to 100 people attended and the responses to the post event survey were positive. The only consistent complaint was that they would have liked it to last a bit longer.

P Morel and D Salcido thanked the committee for their efforts in making this event a success.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm. The next Research Committee meeting will be on 28th May 2021 at 1:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and S. Sant