

**University Senate Research Committee Meeting**

(online)

16 July, 2021

1:00 PM

In Attendance: M. Holland, K. Kanthak, P. Morel, R Rutenbar, S. Sant, A. Sethi, D. Tudorascu, K. Wood, B. Yates

The minutes from the May 28 2021 meeting stand were approved as submitted.

P Morel welcomed the new members to the committee: K Kanthak, D Tudorascu and K Wood.

**Research Report from Rob Rutenbar**

**Covid 19 update**

R. Rutenbar reported that the Health Advisory Committee is meeting regularly to discuss how Pitt will be changing his Covid stance.

P. Morel reported that a letter, initiated by the Department of Immunology, from 400 faculty had been sent to the Chancellor requested that Pitt institute a vaccine mandate. R Rutenbar noted that there will be different rules in place for those who reveal that they are vaccinated versus those who are not vaccinated or choose not to reveal their status. P. Morel noted that it appears that local health institutions, including UPMC, are not requiring vaccines for their staff.

M. Holland is on the committee and will report on any changes to the rules and procedures

**Biorender update**

R. Rutenbar reported that negotiations are ongoing between BioRender and Mark Henderson. The first offer from BioRender was very high and thus there continues to be some back and forth. R. Rutenbar noted that many people on campus have purchased smaller licenses from BioRender and it may not be in the company's interest to include the entire University. He will keep the committee informed as to progress on this issue.

**New Research Computing web page**

R Rutenbar reported that they are working on a new research computing landing page which will list all of the computing resources (programs, software etc) as well as data storage options available to Pitt personnel. If a certain resource does not appear to be available, there will be an option to request it and if many people make the same request the Research Computing team will endeavor to acquire it.

R Rutenbar noted that there is new leadership in research computing that includes Shawn Brown (VC for research computing and Director of the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center) and Adam Hobaugh

S Sant asked whether the new IP policy was now operational. R Rutenbar replied that it was and that the detailed guidance in the form of FAQ is available on the [website](#).

#### Meetings Dates for upcoming year

It appears that Fridays at 1 PM works for most people who were present at the meeting, although S Sant made a request that the meeting might be moved to either the beginning or the end of the day.

ACTION ITEM: P Morel will send out an email to the committee with suggestions for times and also which Friday of each month the committee prefers.

#### Topics to be discussed next year:

P Morel made the following suggestions:

- 1) Invite Dave DeJong (SVC of Business and Operations) to talk about HR changes and to hear the committees concerns about Research technician salaries, promotion etc.
- 2) Invite the IT team to talk about the new research computing landing page described above.

The committee agreed that these should be followed up.

ACTION ITEM: P Morel and S Sant will contact Dave DeJong and the IT team and schedule a time for them to attend our meeting.

R Rutenbar outlined some new initiatives/policies that will be coming up before the committee next year:

- 1) Updated Consulting policy. The old policy was written in 1988 and very short. The new policy is called [Conflict of Commitment and Outside Activities Policy](#)
- 2) A new policy on Institutional COI is being developed. Pitt does not have such a policy and probably needs one following what occurred at Memorial Sloan Kettering when senior officials were found to be in violation of COI policies.
- 3) A policy on the licensing of human subject samples and data is under development. The policy will delineate procedures for access to valuable human data resources to outside companies.
- 4) The Provost and R Rutenbar are developing a new Centers and Institutes policy. At present there are 237 Centers at Pitt, but only 3 are considered Institutes. The aim is to standardize definitions and to create a centralized place where such Centers and Institutes can be listed.

P Morel also noted that the policy on the [Gifts that Sponsor Projects](#) will also be coming before the committee during the next year. She has been on that committee and the policy is close to completion.

#### Other Business

S Sant asked about a recent message concerning nominations of faculty to prestigious awards. R Rutenbar noted that his office had realized that Pitt faculty are not frequently nominated for some important awards, and that there are very likely to be faculty who would be very competitive for such awards.

M Holland described that they had developed a training program to help faculty and departments prepare such nomination packages. It started as a 4 week session but they have now developed a one hour talk that can be given at the Departmental level.

There is a webpage on the OSP website that provides an [interactive list of available awards](#)

There are also resources being put in place that will educate people on how to put effective nomination packages together

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm. The next Research Committee meeting will be in late August – date to be determined

Minutes submitted by P. Morel and S. Sant