

University Senate Research Committee Meeting

(online)

16 December 2022

1:00 PM

In attendance: K Wood, M Scott, B Yates, S Sant, P Morel, Z Xia, F Luyster, A DiPalma, M Holland, D Salcido, M Hall, C Hay, A Sethi, T Songer, A Graham, S Wells

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the *November 18* meeting were approved without changes.

Follow-up on old business: Jennifer Woodward will present at January meeting with an update on the Pitt Research Concierge Program. Uduak Ngho has rescheduled and will present at Feb 2023 meeting.

Research Update from SVC Rob Rutenbar

Dr. Rutenbar unable to be present at meeting. No significant updates to pass on today.

Discussion of plans to collaborate with Faculty Affairs Committee – Dr. Tom Songer, co-chair of Faculty Affairs Committee

Discussed a number of options for working on problems that overlap Senate research and faculty affairs committees. Recognized the current difficulties associated with many of these discussions in terms of getting administrative input given the ongoing partial faculty union bargaining. All agreed that discussion within the committee would be outside the scope of any bargaining position and used for discussion and potential recommendations rather than policy positions.

Potential topics to continue exploring:

1. Investigate the use of the 'research' prefix for faculty across the university – is this clearly defined?; how many faculty have this prefix? Etc
2. Investigate procedures and policies across departments for referral for promotion – seems that there are significant differences between departmental practices on who and how faculty are referred for promotion. Helpful to define the differences and potentially produce some recommendations for making this a more standardized process
3. The weight that 'team science' activities are given as criteria for promotion and tenure – may need to be clarified as more faculty moving towards a team science approach with multi-PI grants and large numbers of collaborators on projects.

To begin with Melanie Scott is going to ask UPSOM for some faculty promotions info. Shilpa Sant is going to do the same in the School of Pharmacy. Faith Luyster will do the same for the School of Nursing. These will be ongoing projects and discussion over the year.

Drone Policy - Allen A. DiPalma, MBA, Director, Office of Trade Compliance; Anthony Graham, Office of Policy Development and Management Office of Research Protections

Slide presentation: Drone policy, including background information

Drone Policy

Dr. DiPalma presented a comprehensive overview of the background of use of unmanned aircraft and current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations governing drone flight, which date back to 1936 and a single-page safety code from the Academy of Model Aeronautics. created a one-page safety code that worked well with only 6 recorded accidents in 80 years. FAA only revisited the regulations when drones started coming on the market in early 2000's and drone flying became much more popular. The Pitt drone policy has been in development since 2018.

There are now regulations for both commercial and recreational drone use and the Pitt drone policy allows drone flights for most purposes as long as the flights adhere to the current FAA guidance, with considerations for privacy, safety and national security export control. The policy applies to the use of drones on behalf of the University, as well as uses of drones on property that Pitt leases or owns. It does not apply to drone operations by Pitt Police or other first-responder operations. There is no requirement for review and approval of drone flights but the policy recommends notification of flights via the Office of Trade Compliance website at least 24h prior to flights so that flight records and commercial drone activity can be recorded for ongoing safety and use assessment. OTC will notify Pitt police in case of any issues or queries.

There are some policy rules specific to Pitt:

- Drones may not be used inside any University-owned or leased building. Exceptions must be requested through the Office of Trade Compliance website
- Drones may not be used to monitor or record areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as offices, classrooms, labs etc
- Drones may not be used to monitor or record sensitive institutional or personally identifiable information (e.g. in individual workspaces)
- Indoor drone flights (not covered by FAA regulations) require prior approval through OTC and facilities management to ensure safety and privacy.

Questions from committee:

- Notification process: is it going to be straightforward? Answer: yes – via website form
- Notification process: how long will it take? Answer: essentially immediate through the website and information passed on to Pitt police
- Heliports: previously considered FAA space but no longer – anything specific in the Pitt policy for flying close to heliports? Answer: FAA policy no longer considers heliports as restricted commercial airspace by themselves; recommendations in policy to give way to manned aircraft to avoid collision, keep drone in visual line of sight to avoid collisions, and operate drones in a safe manner to not endanger safety.
- How does the policy protect privacy? Answer: There are already state and local laws that cover some privacy issues and they will be followed along with the FAA regulations e.g. PA laws protect people from drone surveillance in private places. People are allowed to fly over private property, however, as long as they are not 'spying' or flying recklessly. Local municipalities cannot create new laws to regulate unmanned aircraft without authorization from the State

Vote from committee: 6 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstention – passed unanimously
Policy will be forwarded to Faculty Assembly for consideration.

New items of discussion: none

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

The next Research Committee meeting: January 20 (unless some issues arise in the meantime)

Minutes submitted by: K Wood and M Scott