

**Research Challenge Committee  
October 15, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

- Attendees:** Sawicki, Jerzy, Chair  
M<sup>c</sup>Lennan, Conor, Ex-Officio Member
- |                    |                     |                         |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Austrian, Ziona    | Mazumder, Barsanjit | van den Bogert, Antonie |
| Krasniansky, Maria | Perry, Justin       | Wilson, William         |
| Long, Tim          | Sridhar, Nigamanth  |                         |
- Absent/Excused:** Komar, Anton                      Tebeau, Mark
- Guests:** Craig Zullig, Director of OSPR  
Kathleen Murphy, Assistant VP Finance & Controller's Office

1. Welcome and Introductions of Office of Research Staff and Committee Members
2. Approval of Agenda for October 15, 2012 Meeting  
Approved and seconded as written.
3. Approval of Minutes from the April 16, 2012 Meeting  
Approved and seconded as written.
4. Chair's Remarks on the Research Challenge Committee (RCC)  
The Chair provided new committee members with an overview of the RCC, and issues that the RCC has been able to resolve successfully in the past.
5. Pending and New Research Challenge Related Issues
  - 5.1 Updates
    - The Grants Management Project is still in the pilot program; all components of pre-awards will go paperless by the end of the Fall Semester.
    - A Faculty Expertise Database will be live by the end of October to expand faculty profiles and highlight research expertise.

## 5.2 Open Issues

### a. Purchasing Issues

- Limited information/explanation regarding changes in, and rationale behind, procedures. Procedures should be clearly defined and faculty should be informed.
- Relatively long turnaround time for ordering - may be partly due to a limited number of employees in Purchasing.
- More faculty-oriented service. Faculty should be guided throughout the process.
- Some procedures are out of date (no real-time ordering, no updated budget information, SPO threshold). Our SPO threshold is very small; could this threshold be raised to avoid unnecessary paperwork?
- The Chair invited Kathleen Murphy to this RCC meeting so she could become familiar with these issues and monitor/improve the situation, given that the Purchasing Services Department reports to her office.

### b. Research Grant Accounts

- No-cost extension process - Craig Zullig has drafted a proposal for an Advance Account Policy. With this new system, the grant end date could be extended simply by having one form approved by the Dean. Then, OSPR would extend the end date internally, and the funds would be available. It is hoped that the new policy will be active by the end of the year.
- Re-budgetting of accounts - OSPR is in the process of creating a new system that would allow for fewer steps, and for OSPR to review re-budget requests internally. For now, OSPR will use a paper system until the new system is in place.

### c. Physical Plant Charges

- The Chair will talk with the Director of Physical Plants to determine the logic behind high overhead charges. Complaints are mainly coming from Science and Engineering faculty who need to run labs and do infrastructure changes. It was suggested to contact the new Associate VP of Facilities, Joseph Han.
- Issue of automatic backup power. Labs in Engineering do not have backup power. Joseph Han should have a list of critical labs requiring backup power in case of power failure.

### d. Environmental Safety Office

- Concerns about the Environmental Safety Office were expressed. These concerns will be addressed with Joseph Han as well.

### e. Grants and Development

- An issue was raised at previous meetings to provide a mechanism for critical internal technical review of proposals before submission. Workshops and grant writer availability were suggested.

- The Office of Research is in the process of creating an Office of Proposal Development, which will have two grant writers reporting to the VP for Research. As a pilot, one grant writer will be placed in an office in the COSHP to work directly with COSHP faculty. The second grant writer will reside in the Office of Research. Both grant writers will assist faculty with proposal paperwork, budgeting, writing, etc. There was a suggestion that faculty could give a grant writer the scientific content of the proposal and have the grant writer put everything else together. Timeline - HR will be posting the job ads soon, and it is anticipated to have both grant writers hired by Spring.
- Provide some funds for faculty travel. The newly introduced Graduate Faculty Travel Award Program pays no more than 1/3 of travel costs up to \$1,200 per award. The application has been posted online, and applications are being accepted.

### 5.3 Next Steps

- The issue of graduate tuition surcharge has not yet been resolved. Tim Long and Nigamanth Sridhar will work together to address the issue.
- OSPR will continue working on streamlining grant-related issues (re-budgeting, no-cost extensions, advanced accounts). Craig Zullig will provide a presentation for advanced accounts at the December meeting.
- Purchasing - Kathleen Murphy will return to a meeting in the Spring with resolutions in purchasing, and will possibly attend the December RCC meeting to present her assessment of the situation.
- Joseph Han from Facilities will be invited to the next RCC meeting to discuss the issues.

### 6. New Business

Committee members were asked to present other issues to the Office of Research staff.

7. The next Research Challenge Committee meeting will be on Monday, November 5 at 12:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.