

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty Senate January 11, 2006

In Attendance: Drs. Baruch-Bienen, Brackley, Keiser, Krolick, Meltz, Olson, Parsons, Robichaux, Ruzicka, Tekmal, Verrett, Vines, Whang, Yew.

Absent: Drs. Amaechi, Evans, Geelhoed, Kahlenberg, Lam, Luduena, Plastino, Shah, Sorenson, Vargas.

Guests: Dr. Theresa Chiang
Vice President for Academic Administration

Dr. Brian Herman
Vice President for Research

Convened: 4:05 PM

Senators were again reminded of the upcoming Promotion & Tenure workshops to be held on January 20th and February 3rd.

University Updates

Dr. Theresa Chiang
Vice President for Academic Administration

Dr. Chiang introduce the new Assistant Vice President for Academic Administration, Dr. Robert Kaminski. Dr. Kaminski comes to us from the UT Health Science Center at Houston. In the Dental Branch, he has most recently served as Director of Quality Assurance, giving him many opportunities to serve as a liaison among administration, faculty, students, and staff.

President's Office:

President's Office wishes to remind everyone of the upcoming Presidential Awards Ceremony to be held on Jan. 19 at 11:00 a.m.

Nursing School:

Dr. Jill Hayes has been hired as the new Assistant Dean for Students.

Medical School:

Dr. William L. Henrich, MD, MACP, has been appointed Dean of the Medical School and Vice President for Medical Affairs for the Health Science Center. He will assume his new role in March, 2006.

The Open House for the Clinical Skills Center was held on December 8th.

The ACGME recently informed the UTHSCSA that the Internal Medicine Residency Program at the RAHC has received a four year accreditation.

Dr. Robin Brey was named the Director of Research with focus on the medical students.

Dr. Roberto Villareal was named as the Interim Regional Assistant Dean for Research at the RAHC. A research facility is opening in Edinburgh; its focus will be infectious diseases.

Strategic plan update:

A draft has now been reviewed by the Executive Committee and is due to be circulated among the various governing bodies, including the Faculty Senate, for their review.

Research Update: Bridge Funding and Space Policies

Dr. Brian Herman

Vice President for Research

Dr. Herman provided an update on his efforts to develop 1) plans for bridge funding for investigators facing a very difficult funding climate, and 2) plans for more effective utilization of research space. The following is extracted from Dr. Herman's PowerPoint presentation.

It should be noted that this discussion will continue at a town hall-style meeting to be held on **Thursday, February 2nd, from 4:00-5:00 PM in room 3.102B** next to Java City.

PROPOSED BRIDGE FUNDING PROGRAM:

As the NIH budget for research becomes more restrictive and the NIH puts in place its roadmap initiatives, it has become much more difficult for investigators to sustain uninterrupted NIH funding. It is expected that currently funded competitive investigators will suffer lapses in NIH funding. To address this issue, the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) is establishing a "Bridge Funding Program" for the institution.

This program is intended to provide bridge funding for previously funded NIH investigators whose competitive renewal applications do not receive a fundable priority score. The program will provide matching funds to those provided by the department chair, center director and dean to allow the investigator up to 3 cycles of bridge support (i.e. through the A2 submission cycle).

General Guidelines:

Given the challenging climate for federal funding, it is recommended that investigators begin planning in the last two years of the current grant for carry forward funds that will allow some funds for a no-cost extension period.

Requests for bridge funding will be limited to those individuals who do not have current NIH or other extramural funding, and whose NIH competitive renewal applications were not funded. RCDA and administrative components of PO1/center grants are excluded from participation in this program. The applicant has to have submitted a competitive renewal application to be eligible for these bridge funds with a previous priority score at the 25% or better (i.e. 0-25%). The maximal amount of funds that will be made available will be \$30,000 per award per application cycle.

Any funds made available to the investigator by the department/center/school/VPR office should be used as the first source of bridge funding. The source and extent of all funds available to the investigator including carry over funds, VPR research incentive/reward program funds and individual 48xxx Project ID's (T accounts) has to be detailed in the application packet.

A cumulative 1:1 match is required by both the investigator's department and school (dean's office). Salary for the principal investigator used to offset prior effort on previous NIH grant(s) is allowable for usage as matching funds.

Matching funding can also be requested from center directors; in this case a 2:1 match is required (i.e. the department/dean/center director total match will be up to 60K if 30K is requested from the VPR bridge program).

There are no deadlines for this program. Applicants may request support as needed. Funds cannot be used for faculty salaries and as such departments/schools at a minimum should bear the salary components of faculty, graduate students and residents/fellows carrying out grant supported research. The application for bridge funding can be submitted after the initial review of the first competitive renewal proposal and/or after review of A1 competitive renewal application. Review of requests for bridge funding will be carried out by the University Research Council with decisions expected within 60 days of application.

If extramural grant funds (for the project in question) become available to the investigator during the bridge funding period, any remaining bridge funds will be returned to the office of the VPR

Application Components:

Materials that will be required with an application for bridge funding include:

- Competitively reviewed grant applications (both proposals for A1 and all three proposals for A2 application) including budget pages.

- NIH Summary Statements
- Draft 3 page Introduction to be submitted with revised application.
- One page statement from the PI with other information that strengthens the case for bridge funding.
- Budget including summary of other bridge funds available to the investigator and a plan for the use of the bridge funding.

For bridge funding requests based on A1 and A2 applications, in addition to the above requested information, the investigator should provide (1) a full list of publications and presentations authored or coauthored by the applicant during the previous 6 month period; (2) a complete list of expenses charged against the bridge funding provided to date; (3) a description of progress to date; and (4) copies of *all* grant submissions and summary statements during the previous 6 month period. Unobligated funds may not be carried over from one 6-month period to the next.

Points of concern expressed by senators:

- How is equity to be insured if bridge funding is only to be offered for support of NIH-funded projects?
- Do the resources exist to guarantee that department/school matching funds will be available?

PROPOSED RESEARCH SPACE ALLOCATION POLICY:

Research space allocation is to be based on a research space productivity index (RSPI). This is a rolling three year average of direct plus indirect income divided by assignable square feet of research space, and can be calculated for an investigator, a department or a school. A percentile rank can be calculated for one's RSPI in comparison to a target RSPI determined for each school based upon national norms for like schools. For example, the Graduate and Medical schools, judged by the same national standard, have a target RSPI of \$350/sq. ft.

Once each fiscal year, the RSPI will be calculated from data collected by the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Planning Office on a school, department and individual investigator basis and forwarded to department chairs, deans, center directors and the Office of the VPR and VP for Academic Affairs for review and clarification. Credit for individual investigators on multi-investigator projects will be determined by negotiated agreement at the time of submission of the proposal between the department chair/dean/center director as indicated on the COP. Space donated by a department to an institutional core facility, as defined by the VPR, will be omitted from the RSPI calculation.

Any investigator/department/school/center that is at the bottom 25% or at the 125% of the school specific RSPI will automatically trigger an institutional review of the space utilization in that unit. When research productivity is at or below the 50th percentile of the school RSPI, the PI will be given two years to attain the RSPI, if they are not new hires. For new faculty below Associate Professor, 3 years grace will automatically be given. For new faculty at the Associate Professor and Professor levels, they are expected to be at 50th percentile of the school specific RSPI upon hire and have 2 years to reach the school specific RSPI.

The first application of pressure to correct poorly productive space will be by the department Chair or center director-- he/she has the option of reassigning space to highly productive faculty in the department/center. Space cannot be exchanged between departments/schools/centers in an attempt to alter the RSPI. The institution will hold the Deans and center directors when appropriate accountable at the individual PI/department/center level for meeting the school specific RSPI.

After two years of below-minimum research utilization, space may be reduced so that remaining research conforms to the school specific RSPI. The institution may, at its discretion, permit the space to remain available to the school, department, center and/or PI, but for every \$10/ft² below the school RSPI, the department/PI must pay \$1/ft² to the institution. Failure to pay the "rent" results in loss of space. A sliding scale will be established from this base level that will increase the institutional assessment for space to current prevailing commercial market rates for similar types of space over a three year period.

If a department/school/center are at the 125% or above of the school specific RSPI, a portion of the F & A's will be returned formulaically as an incentive for this enhanced RSPI. For new space needs, departments and centers will submit yearly requests and justification for changes in space allocation to the Deans who will copy these requests to the VPR and VPAA. The Dean's office will prioritize requests based on RSPI and THECB calculations, i.e. departments and centers with high RSPI may be candidates for increases in space allocation at the expense of departments with low values.

The Deans will allocate space among departments and other reporting entities, which will then allocate space to faculty members. The ECSM will only adjudicate space disputes between Deans, department chairmen and faculty members under exceptional circumstances. RSPI calculations will be used as part of the chair/dean evaluation a system, and will be used as part of departmental budget process.

Limited exceptions will be considered only, upon written appeal to the President.

Points of concern expressed by senators:

- It is not clear that there is such a disparity regarding effective use of research space to warrant implementation of such a policy that might have a significantly negative impact on faculty morale.
- With regard to the Direct + Indirect costs total as the basis for calculating the RSPI, how is equity to be guaranteed with regard to differences in indirect costs allowed by federal vs. private funding agencies?
- How is equity to be guaranteed with regard to investigators of equal productivity, but whose science entails inherent differences in the cost of performing the research? For example, investigations with inherently larger budgets involving large numbers of expensive animals will score higher RSPIs than those that do not employ, or request funds for, animals.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:20.