

MINUTES

Research Strategic Advisory Council

Thursday, November 17, 2016

3:00pm – 4:00pm

ALTC 2.203

Members Present: Andrea Giuffrida, Kathryn Aultman, Mike Beckstead, Carrie Jo Braden, Christopher Green, Byron Hepburn, Robin Leach, Robert Clark, Erzsebet Kokovay, Alexander Pertsemlidis, Jennifer Potter, Rajeshwar Tekmal, David Cappelli and Kyumin Whang

Members Absent: Maureen Simmonds and Ian Thompson

Guests: Mark Nijland, Valerie Hutchison

Minutes from 10/10/16 were approved.

Bioinformatics Core

The new Bioinformatics Core was approved last year by RSAC and Dr. Yidong Chen (Professor, Epidemiology & Biostatistics) was selected as the Scientific Director. The Office of the VP for Research provided resources to hire 3 full-time programmers, 1 Core Director and 1 Administrative Assistant. RSAC discussed the current status of the Bioinformatics Core, which has: 1) received a CPRIT Core award to acquire a medium size sequencer and additional lab automation system to speed up the service time, as well as a 500 TB for centralized data management; 2) planned to purchase additional servers for NGS operations via UTSA collaboration and philanthropy; 3) scheduled a NGS/Bioinfo Core User Group Meeting on 12/14/16, a Metagenomics meeting for the end of January 2017; and (4) planned to develop a summer training course. Unfortunately, neither the Core Director nor the programmers have been hired so far, as recruitment for this type of position is difficult. Dr. Nijland noted that an important question to consider is how IIMS, CTTC, Clinical Research and Basic Science communities can benefit from bioinformatics services supported by the institution. The Council discussed several options on how to make the Bioinformatics Core more successful and recommended that the newly hired Institutional Core Director, Ramiro Ramirez-Solis - who will start on 1/9/17 - should assist Dr. Chen by coordinating the Core personnel recruitment and supporting its infrastructure development. Dr. Nijland offered to assist in the coordination of the current open position until Dr. Ramirez-Solis' arrival at the UTHSA.

Limited Funding Opportunities

Ms. Hutchison gave a follow-up report on the UTHSA success rates for limited funding opportunities. The report included the list of successful and non-successful awards. Several of the successful awards were CPRIT grants and San Antonio Area Foundation awards. In 2013, the number of successful applications were low due to the CPRIT moratorium; in addition, the San Antonio Area Foundation at that time did not offer limited funding opportunities. In 2014, out of 14 non-federal awards, 5 were CPRIT, 3 San Antonio Area Foundation, 3 St. Baldrick's Foundation and 3 other foundations. In 2016, Ten limited funding applications were accepted by the San Antonio Area Foundation (still pending). As other awards are also pending, the success rates looks low at this time. Ms. Hutchison noted that potential deadlines for future limited submission opportunities are now posted in a spreadsheet format on the OSP website.

Strategic Plan for Research 2018-2022

Dr. Giuffrida reported that UTHSA is currently developing a strategic plan for 2018-2022. The strategic plan process has engaged the Deans of each school, administrative leadership, faculty and the President, and is setting key priorities for the institution across its missions: education, research, health care, and community engagement. Six research areas of strength have been identified: aging, cancer,

diabetes, immunology & infectious diseases, neurosciences, and population health. Within each research theme, focus groups were convened across UTHSA to discuss details and identify resource and needs, including recruitment. The strategic planning goals include: 1) develop and articulate the enterprise's strategic themes for 2018-2022; 2) Drive alignment of vision, priorities, and activities; 3) Define goals, strategies, and tactics necessary for UTHSA to pursue its mission; 4) Develop financial requirements for achieving the defined goals and implement the plan. In the Research arena, the recommended goal is to develop programs of distinction that leverage the unique assets of the South Texas community, including its diverse populations and military presence. Benchmarks will include: 1) Development of a business plan and integrated recruiting plan for each research theme; 2) Development of medical/bio-informatics, and biobanking services; 3) Investments in clinical trials network and infrastructure; 4) Support for faculty development and collaboration.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10pm