

MINUTES

Research Strategic Advisory Council

Thursday, May 14, 2015

3:00pm – 4:00pm

302 AAB

Members Present: Andrea Giuffrida, Reto Asmis, Carrie Jo Braden, Robert Clark, Christopher Green, Alexander Pertsemliadis, Rajeshwar Tekmal, Paul Fitzpatrick, Thomas Oates, Kyumin Whang, Paula Shireman and Byron Hepburn

Members Absent: Maureen Simmonds, Mike Beckstead, Erzsebet Kokovay and Ian Thompson

Minutes from 3/12/15 approved by Council

Dr. Giuffrida was officially named the Vice President for Research on 4/22/15. As part of his recruitment package, additional resources have been secured for the DLAR, research cores and the “Cores catastrophic fund”, which is used to cover emergency expenses (e.g., malfunction of large equipment). Also, discretionary funds are now available to the Office of the VPR.

Dr. Giuffrida would like to use a portion of these funds to create a Bioinformatics Core upon approval of the President and the Research Strategic Advisory Council.

Follow up: For discussion at the next meeting, Dr. Giuffrida requested the RSAC committee to identify a list of items that might be supported by his discretionary funds - such as seed funds, infrastructure, etc. At the next meeting, Dr. Giuffrida will also discuss the upcoming renovation work in the DLAR to solicit the committee’s feedback.

Dr. Giuffrida introduced Dr. Byron Hepburn (Director, Military Health Institute) as a newly elected member of the committee by the President.

Bioinformatics development Follow Up

Dr. Giuffrida gave a brief summary of the previous discussion on the structure of the Bioinformatics Core, which will provide bioinformatics service to our research community. The structure should include two full time bioinformaticians (100% for the first two years and then 50% for year 3 & 4) and one director (30% effort). Conversation has been started with UT Austin for collaboration/partnership to leverage local infrastructure and the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC). At the request of the committee at the previous meeting, Dr. Pertsemliadis confirmed the willingness of Dr. Scott Hunicke-Smith at UT Austin to partner with the HSC. Dr. Pertsemliadis noted the next step would be to map out how the partnership would work. Dr. Shireman suggested to include Dr. Yidong Chen in the bioinformatics discussion, as he represents a major player within the HSC bioinformatics community. Dr. Giuffrida agreed to schedule a meeting with Drs. Shireman, Chen and Houghton to further discuss and/or revise the infrastructure of the Bioinformatics Core. The committee agreed to move forward.

Performance Evaluation Form for Faculty/Researchers

Dr. Giuffrida reviewed the previous points of discussion to provide a final recommendation to Dr. Mok on how to evaluate faculty/researchers (basic science) consistently across the departments. The purpose of the performance evaluation is to improve faculty development, to communicate the expectation from the institution and to provide appropriate and consistent metrics across the different departments. The committee decided to identify the key requirements for the evaluation, leaving the Chairs free to decide on the format of the evaluation form.

The committee agreed that the evaluation should be performed annually and that the key requirements should include: grant funding, publications from the year being reviewed, presentations at meetings,

service (institution, professional societies, etc.), mentoring and career development of trainees, teaching and intellectual property.

Follow up: Dr. Giuffrida will submit the recommendation to Dr. Mok.

Resources for grants addressing military health

Dr. Giuffrida had previous discussions with Dr. Hepburn regarding the issue of helping faculty preparing grants for DoD, DARPA, VA or other military agencies, due to the different formats and requirements compared to NIH grants. Dr. Giuffrida asked if the HSC needs a Military GrantSeekers, grant writing services or seed funds to facilitate research collaborations with the military. Dr. Hepburn noted that he held a introductory workshop on DoD grant funding. The presentation included a basic diagram of the DoD funding process and a talk from representatives of the Office of Sponsored Programs on the requirements for grant submission. Dr. Hepburn added that other presentations are in the works; in particular, Dr. Joseph Schmelz has agreed to hold a presentation for the Tri-Service Research Program to explain the process, and Col. Schlicher (Director, Tri-Service Research Program) might also hold a presentation. Finally, several faculty have agreed to serve as DoD mentors for applicants looking for assistance. The committee recommended to talk with Dr. Ahuja to explore the possibility of expanding the GrantSeeker panels to include expertise in military grants. Dr. Giuffrida encouraged the Military Health Institute (MHI) to create a workshop series to dissect different components of military grants to explain in greater detail what is needed to navigate through the process.

Follow up: Dr. Hepburn will obtain feedback from the University of Pennsylvania on their model for addressing military health grants and then brief the committee at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.