Senate Research Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 23, 2015; 3:00 PM  
522 Centennial Hall

Attendees: Amber Amari, Justin Brightharp (SGA), Andy Butler, Sarah Cook, Joan Cranford, Dabney Dixon, Laura Fredrick, Joseph Hurley, Beth Jones, Paul Katz, Shelley Linens, Ed Rigdon, MaryAnn Romski, Lionel Scott, Rose Sevcik (Chair), Kelly Stout, Mary Stuckey, Jelena Subotic, Jim Weyhenmeyer, Sheila White, and Leslie Wolf

Absentees: Pam Barr, Tim Bartness, Brenda Chapman, Baotong Gu, Carrie Manning, Unil Perera, Sushil Prasad, Vincent Rehder, Don Reitzes, Bill Robinson, Laura Salazar, Anna Stewart, Kris Varjas, Dan Weiskopf, Yichuan Zhao, and Alan Ziobrowski

Minutes: Rose Baldwin

1. The February 16, 2015 minutes were approved.

2. Dr. White delivered a brief report on the IRB’s activity and a handout was provided. There have been 414 IRB submissions year to date. 218 were expedited studies with 186 approved yielding an 85% approval rate. The projected total for the entire year is 560, with the previous year at 588. The average expedited review turnaround time is 7 days. Overall, researchers seemed to be satisfied with the turnaround time.

3. Chair Sevcik spoke about the risk of data loss in the IRB protocol management system and the importance to resolve this ongoing issue. Dr. Fredrick added that she learned that several other faculty members have experienced a similar situation. Dr. White responded that the vendor has been made aware of these data migration issues and are currently awaiting a response from the vendor. Additional, Dr. White will meet with IS&T to determine if an interim fix can alleviate this present issue and she will share updates with committee. Faculty members experiencing problems are encouraged to email her directly. Dr. Stout added that a training module is under development that provides instruction in completing an IRB protocol application.

Dr. White mentioned that for those researchers who have external collaborators on an IRB protocol, there is an online form that investigators can complete that includes documentation of CITI training.

4. Dr. Stout briefly reported on the preliminary results for the internal grant competition that recently concluded for FY16 grant mechanisms. A total of 48 Research Initiation Grant (with Mentor Option) and 7 Scholarly Support Grant applications were received. Dr. Weyhenmeyer stated that he will be reviewing next fiscal year’s budget in April and based on funds available, a decision will be made on how many grants will be funded this cycle.

Dr. Stout noted that the internal grants subcommittee will be meeting next month and after which she will provide a report on program changes and issues experienced through the year.

5. Chair Sevcik provided a reminder to committee members that the academic year is rapidly coming to a close and expressed the importance to communicate to graduate students the option to embargo their theses or dissertations. Further graduate students should be made aware that Scholarly Works is considered a type of publication. Dr. Fredrick iterated the importance to ensure students not risk their authorship roles with theses or dissertations. Ms. Amari commented that the library has a checklist that can aid in this effort. Many committee members discussed specific concerns with the open access policy and agreed to revisit the procedural piece in opting out in an effort to protect scholarly works of graduate students. The committee recommended that our legal department work with GA Tech’s legal department to understand their policy that
allows graduate students to opt-in versus opt-out. Dr. Weyhenmeyer responded that he plans to meet with Dr. Heyward regarding the policy structure at GA Tech and to discuss the possibility to adapt the embargo practice. Chair Sevcik suggested inviting university attorneys to a future meeting.

6. The following VPR updates were provided:
   a. Dr. Weyhenmeyer reported that year-to-date award activities are approximately $69 million, almost a 35% increase over the previous year. The target close for FY15 is $100 million in total grants and contracts activities.
   b. Dr. Weyhenmeyer expressed concern that there has been only one request for support to cover the cost of an open access submission. Dr. Stout stated we have institutional memberships with two open access publishers, which are Hindawi Publishing and BioMed Central.
   c. Dr. Weyhenmeyer summarized the GSU and GPC implementation committee activities that relate to research. A large number of compliance tasks such as environmental health and safety are included. GPC research activity is modest, requiring a minimal amount of IRB reviews and no IACUC reviews. Dr. Weyhenmeyer stated that a copy of the audit report on teaching labs is available by request. Dr. Stuckey noted an item that increased for GSU is additional administrative burdens.

7. Dr. Rigdon addressed a concern in writing review letters for faculty who are undergoing post tenure and promotion and tenure review. He underscored the challenge posed by publishing outlets that now include open access and some so-called predatory journals. Additional discussions were led by members that ranged from the importance to differentiate outlets for junior faculty to ensuring that tenured faculty also were aware of the issues in publishing in such outlets. Suggestions included the development of a FAQ to resolve commonly experienced problems for faculty. Dr. Fredrick suggested that the issue fundamentally belongs in faculty affairs since its association is with the promotion and tenure review process. Chair Sevcik stated she will share this issue with the Chair of the Faculty Affairs committee and ask them to address this issue for the university faculty.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2015 at 3:00 PM in 522 Centennial Hall.