Senate Research Committee Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2016, 3:00 PM  
522 Centennial Hall

Attendees: Elaine Bryan, Andy Butler, Brenda Chapman, Elena Del Rio Parra, Dabney Dixon, Florian Enescu, Candace Kemp, Lawrence Kiage, Amy Lederberg, Jill Littrell, Ken Packman, Jerry Rackliffe, Ed Rigdon, Sally Robertson, MaryAnn Romski, Rose A. Sevcik (Chair), Kelly Stout, Mary Stuckey, Jelena Subotic, Monica Swahn, Kris Varjas, Leslie Wolf, Brett Wong, and Yali Zhao


Minutes: Rose Baldwin

1. The November 14, 2016 minutes were approved.

2. Dr. Chapman discussed the following ORI updates:
   a. The Expedited IRB will soon be revamped with an improved review process in order to resolve present burdens as well as improve turnaround times.
   b. The IRB iRIS system is expected to transition into an updated system anticipating implementation in February 2017.
   c. The Radiation Protection Committee has named a new chair, Dr. Xiaochun He, since Dr. Benardot retired from GSU recently.

3. Chair Sevcik reported that currently booked FY17 Q2 grant and contract awards are at $79.9 million. It was also noted that we are monitoring the potential federal funding changes that will be part of agenda for the incoming U.S. president and administration early next year.

4. Dr. Packman provided important information on significant changes made to the State Pcard policy that will, ultimately, minimize the number of cardholders across campus and restrict point-of-sale by lowering the single transaction limit to $1K. In addition to this, effective February 28, 2017, the usage of Pcards for acquisition of goods and services will be discontinued for all purchases directly affiliated with sponsored award accounts and will need to be processed through the university’s PantherMart system. The new rules will assure additional improvements for fiscal controls as well as decrease possible audit risks.

   Dr. Dixon brought up issues surrounding the administrative burdens in processing a single purchase order including lengthy approval times of up to 2 weeks and stated that this is problematic in meeting the obligations as outlined in research projects efficiently. Dr. Packman responded by stating that the Purchasing Department will need to address issues arising from processing purchase orders to ensure a doable outcome due to rigid policy changes. Dr. Romski expressed concern about departments/units who lack proper staffing levels noting that Pcards have served as an alternative to overcome this obstacle. As such, faculty will be more apt to apply business expenses onto their own personal credit cards due to the inconvenience. Dr. Packman said that his group as well as the university comptroller are currently considering various options to provide alternative solutions to ease some of the administrative and/ or financial burdens associated with the procurement of goods and services.

5. Dr. Packman provided a brief reminder that a broadcast message will be forthcoming regarding OSPA's work schedule during the holiday closure.
6. Dr. Rackliffe presented to the committee an overview of the university’s FY17 general fund budget and expenditure data of nearly $1 billion that covered major categories such as research, education, and services. A brief historical overview of FY08-FY17 budget tuitions and state appropriations (formula blend) was given as well. He also shared proposed university’s construction projects for examples expansion of the Science Park with a third building and demolition of Kell Hall building. The PPT presentation is available upon request.

7. Dr. Stout revisited the examination of internal grant dissertation program awardees who were unsuccessful in the completion of their degree program within a prescribed timeline. The analysis concluded that out of the 174 dissertation awardees only 6 of those since FY2008 left their programs without completing their degrees. Reasons provided for incompletion were examples of serious illnesses, for example. Overall, the majority of students are completing the program in 1.4 years after obtaining the grant award and said program is showing documented success through the years.

The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2017 at 3:00 PM in 365 Edgewood Building (URSA).