Senate Research Committee Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2018 3:00 PM
545 Centennial Hall

Attendees: Andrew Butler, Laura Carscaddon, Lisa Marie Casanova, Brenda Chapman, Geert de Vries, Jacob English, Lindsey Hornsby, Archana Iyer, Denise Jenkins, Candace Kemp, Donya Little, Anne Murphy, Unil Perera, Sally Robertson, Maryann Romski, Erin Ruel, Rose A. Sevcik (Chair), Susan Snyder, Kelly Stout, Jelena Subotic, James Weyhenmeyer, Elizabeth West, Aleksandr Zelikovskiy, and Yali Zhao

Absentees: Elena Del Rio Parra, Dabney Dixon, Andrew Gewirtz, Julia Hilliard, Ken Johnson, Nadine Kabengi, Tony Lemieux, Abhay Mishra, Martin Norgaard, Remus Osan, Ed Rigdon, Vincent Rehder, Bill Robinson, Duane Truex, Kris Varjas, Antrell Vining, Jack Williams, and Brett Wong

Minutes: Rose Baldwin

1. The February 19, 2018 minutes were approved.

2. Dr. Chapman reported on an effort between the ORI Research & Environmental Safety Office and the Department of Animal Resources to create a basic standard operating procedure (SOP) document to outline health safety and training requirements when investigators, research staff, and students are working with chemicals in a laboratory environment associated with handling animals. A draft copy of the SOP document was provided. The new guideline establishes four levels of chemical safety recommended in the conduct of animal research. A recent evaluation revealed 70 known chemicals are actively used in an animal laboratory setting. The SOP document will ensure animal researchers maintain compliance with relevant governmental regulations, and the final document will be posted on URSA and DAR’s webpages.

3. Dr. Romski provided an update on some preliminary information from the faculty infrastructure working group. In this current phase of review, the group is reviewing the constructs of the grant administrative infrastructure (pre and post) that includes the allotted number of staff support to research portfolio dollars. Also, part of their review will cover Georgia State’s relevant peer and aspirational research universities along with the VPR’s suggested list. The Huron benchmark study 2005 of Georgia State offers some guidance on critical areas to assess; however, the research administration has changed noticeably in the last 13 years. Huron group is willing to do a benchmark report supplied at no charge and such a report will lend valuable insight for the working group to conduct a more realistic assessment. Dr. Weyhenmeyer relayed some historical points on Georgia State’s grant administration drawing particular notice on the central-led system reshaped into a hybrid-type and the implemented roles between colleges and central office. He also strongly recommended that the working group review those university research administrations with a similar system like Georgia State. He also shared an idea where possibly some academic units may be allowed authorized signatory authority in conjunction with OSPA. Dr. Romski mentioned the working group’s next discussion topics are to review those entities with hybrid systems, training and support for researchers, and indirect cost financial administration. Senate research members unanimously agreed to fully support Dr. Weyhenmeyer in obtaining a new tailored Huron report to further assist us in determining the current needs in our research infrastructure in order to keep our strong momentum going forward.

4. Dr. Weyhenmeyer reported on the subsidy provided by the VPR’s office supporting animal care and vivarium costs at Georgia State. The current animal per diem formula rate presents a major constraint on his operating budget, and the last time a rate increase occurred was 2011; costs have proliferated greatly since then. Other research universities have shown animal researchers typically pay much more in comparison to per diem rates charged at Georgia State. Therefore, after having long discussions with Dr. Hart, the university veterinarian, a three percent annual charge year-over-year will be assessed on all species (nonhuman primates to rodents). Grants that
are noncompetitive renewals will not be affected by this revised rate plan; only competitive renewals will be affected. A broadcast message about the modified animal per diem rate agreement will be forthcoming.

Drs. Romski and Murphy shared similar concerns that researchers with intramural animal research may not have been counted in the animal census and it should include those numbers too. Dr. Weyhenmeyer replied he will talk with the university veterinarian about animal numbers affiliated with intramural research projects.

5. Dr. Weyhenmeyer reported FY18 year-to-date in total grant and contract award activity closed under $100 million approximately. Also, an update was provided about the federal congressional budget for the current fiscal year and discussed that some federal agencies will expect larger disbursements to their budgetary levels for research and development while others anticipate little increase to their budgets.

6. Chair Sevcik announced Dr. Jack Williams’ appeal was approved for him to continue as a member on the GSURF board.

The next meeting will be held on April 23, 2018 at 3:00 PM in Room 365 of the 58 Edgewood Avenue Building.