Research Council Minutes  
October 19, 2016  
R1 – Rm. 148/154

Attendance – Kalpana Katti, Svetlana Kilina, Kevin McPhee, Bernhardt Saini-Eidukat, Todd Lewis, Christi McGeorge, Mark Strand, Chad Ulven, Xiangfa Wu, Chanchai Tangpong, Eduardo Faundez, Val Kettner, Sheri Anderson, Jolynne Tschetter, Caroline Miner, Kelly Rusch

Call to order at 3:30 PM

Announcements:
VPR Kelly Rusch thanked representatives for attending the last meeting and providing input into the Novelution discovery process. The vendors had very productive meetings with the following key groups: Chairs/Heads, Research Council, VP IT, Grant Coordinators, Grant & Contract Accounting, Research Integrity & Compliance, Business Development and SPA. After visiting NDSU, they engaged in a similar process at UND, and then closed the loop by bringing all the ideas back here for a final discussion.

The Electronic Research Administration project is on schedule to roll out the first module in early 2018.

VPR Kelly Rusch will be distributing nondisclosure documents to the new committee members for signature.

Sheri Anderson requested volunteers to serve as evaluators for the NDSU EXPLORE event on Nov 1. There are 80 projects this year and 105 students participating.

New business:
CORE Facilities

Core facilities are intended to serve a range of people and can be organized at the Department, College or institutional level. There are currently four core facilities identified as institutional level facilities. The EML and AIM labs receive institutional funding and the Protein Synthesis and Core Biology Lab are funded via an NIH COBRE award. Currently, NDSU has an advisory panel for the core facilities; however, the Research Council will take on the role of evaluating the CORE facilities on campus. The VPR is asking the Research Council to evaluate core facility utilization and advise on optimizing their use (e.g., should there be additional core facilities? is it possible to leverage use to generate income?).

Policy 110.1

This is a new policy intended specifically to address the federal and State nepotism requirements as they apply to sponsored research. The key message is that it is okay to have immediate family members on the same project as long as there is a management plan governing activities / situations in which conflicts of interest could arise.
The VPR requested comments and suggestions on the draft policy. There was much discussion clarifying the scope and intent of the policy and the representatives offered the following suggestions:

1. Suggested replacing “relatives” with “immediate family” in the title and body because this is the term used and defined in the NDUS policy 603.3, “Nepotism.”
2. Suggested adding a preamble to make it clear that the policy is neutral / positive in its support of collaborations involving immediate family. Specifically, ensure that it is understood that we do not discourage family members serving together on research. Rather the purpose is to ensure we are meeting federal government guidance and expectations that institutions manage nepotism and similar COIs, and have internal controls to oversee these types of relationships.
3. Suggestion to replace “Specifically, nepotism arises when” with “Specifically, the risk or the possibility of nepotism arises when”
4. Given that not all sponsors define the role of the PI the same, recommend that NDSU define the “PI” as the person identified as the PI on our internal routing form (PTF) as the PI for purposes of this policy (i.e., bullet #1)
5. PI can remove co-PIs regardless of supervisory relationship. Discussion whether “supervisory” is the correct term or whether “power differential” or “collaborators” would be better.
6. Recommendation to define PI as described in 3, and then reword bullet #1 to “An NDSU employee has a family relationship with anyone on the proposal / protocol.”
7. Discussion about the use of “advisable” and what it means, and concern about using soft, fuzzy terms in a policy statement. Seems like a “gotcha” if you don’t choose to follow the advice. Remove? Reword? Other options suggested included “may elect to file” or clarify it is “optional”. Further discussion included allowing colleges/departments make decisions if a plan was needed in the case of co-PI’s but this is complicated as not all individuals affected by the policy are within the same college/department.
8. Question re: first sentence in last paragraph. What is the exemption? Clarify that this means “exemption from this policy.” The VPR has developed procedures which she is waiting to distribute after discussion of the policy.
   a. Suggestion that “Request for exemption is triggered when one, or both, of the two conditions above is true.”
   b. Suggestion to change wording to “Exemption must be approved before hiring of immediate family.”
   c. Suggestion: anchor requirement for written, approved exemption to “the risk of or the possibility of nepotism arises when: …”
9. Discussion as to whether or not “immediate family” includes “domestic partner”.

Bylaws:

Research Council didn’t have time to cover this topic, so discussion of RC bylaws will be postponed until next meeting. VRP mentioned using the bylaws of the graduate council as a starting point for developing the bylaws for the Research Council.