

**Research Advisory Committee (RAC)**  
**10/13/21**  
**Minutes**

Circulated: November 1, 2021

Approved: November 4, 2021

Present: Robert Ploutz-Snyder (Chair), Rebecca Cunningham (VP for Research), Marilia Cascalho, Natalie Colabianchi, Claudia Figueroa-Romero, Hafiz Malik, Vilma Mesa, Nathan Qi, Teri Rosales, Yulia Sevryugina, Mohamad Tiba, Jay Vornhagen, Elizabeth Devlin

Absent: Elena Gallo, Vania Hinkovska-Galcheva, Marouane Kessentini, Vitaliy Popov

Chair Ploutz-Snyder called the meeting to order.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder welcomed the committee and VP Cunningham. The committee members introduced themselves and provided their purpose for joining the Committee.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder gave the committee an overview and brief orientation on how the committee will run throughout the year. The expectations for the committee are to generally follow Robert's rules and maintain confidentiality.

VP Cunningham shared with the committee her past experience with the committee and how she views the advisory role moving forward. This is an opportunity for VP Cunningham to hear from researchers working on the ground and to hear their concerns or interests. She would like to understand how things are working and how they are not working across faculty research work. She would also like to hear ideas on how to improve and how to roll out new information and initiatives.

The committee members discussed the composition of the committee and how they would like to see more diverse representation across the schools and colleges. The committee discussed reaching out to Faculty Senate to potentially modify the language in the call-to-action text to garner a more diverse pool of faculty volunteers for the committee. The committee discussed offering post docs a shorter term to increase post-doctoral representation, typical terms are for three years and perhaps reduce the term to either one or two years. The members of the committee that represent staff suggested an overlap year for transitional purposes.

Student representatives will be added once the Faculty Senate Office receives those assignments from Student Governance.

**Committee Charge Review and Discussion**

The committee reviewed and discussed the charge for 2021-2022. Chair Ploutz-Snyder invited members to share what topics under the charge they would be interested in pursuing this year.

Potential Topics



1. Mission and governance of the biorepository
  - a. The general funding is from the Medical School, and the issues of interest would be the governance and researcher access to the biorepository.
  - b. VP Cunningham indicated that the biorepository wasn't under her purview but if this is something the committee is interested in understanding, she could offer guidance and connect the committee with the appropriate group to discuss this topic. Chair Ploutz-Snyder will send a note to VP Cunningham regarding this request.
2. Research Publication
  - a. Open Access: Researchers are encouraged to publish their work and make it open access, but there is a lack of funds available to certain researchers. For example, librarians, post docs and students.
  - b. VP Cunningham indicated that senior leadership had planned to address open access issues, and planning was delayed two years due to COVID. The issue is ongoing and the committee could invite guest speakers to give the committee an overview of the status of the public access and open access issues.

### **VP Cunningham Updates:**

VP Cunningham asked the committee as of October, if they felt that they were researching in a place that is similar to their pre-pandemic life in research?

#### *Committee Feedback:*

A committee member from Dearborn indicated that his research, which is in security devices and sensors, is close to normal pre-pandemic levels.

The recruitment of post docs has been affected and has become more difficult and taking longer than before causing delays.

The recruitment of patients is difficult due to slow enrollment and consent preventing certain procedures from taking place. A part of research development is in person interaction, and the lack of in person interaction impacts the work. The committee member indicated that the research is she referring to is transplant surgery work with living donor and recipients and has experienced a profound decrease in living donor pairs.

Committee members that work with animals conducting animal research indicated that they are at full capacity as of April with no issues with animal procurement or personnel and are at pre-COVID levels. In some animal labs they are exceeding pre-pandemic levels and are now having issues recruiting animal lab technicians since they have higher paying options.

The clinical research has become more difficult because of a lot of changes as it relates to patient recruitment. Committee members that work with critical patients are required to get direct consent. The lack of face-to-face interaction with family members is an issue because not being allowed to visit patients, it takes longer for recruiters to obtain consent.

Committee Chair Ploutz-Snyder reported that they are nearly at pre-Covid levels, but community-based programs are lagging behind because community partners are still

dealing with or recovering from COVID.

A committee member from the School of Education reported two issues including that of recruitment of participants in classrooms. They are reducing their doctoral program admissions, and they no longer can recruit over 8 people.

Committee member Rosales shared that ADVANCE is conducting a follow up study of the faculty experience, and if there are some specific questions that VP Cunningham would like to ask related to the role of research and the impact for clinical and research, please provide her with those questions and she will work on having them included in the study.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder reminded the committee of the next meeting, and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Devlin  
Faculty Senate Office