



## Research Advisory Committee (RAC) Minutes

February 10, 2022  
11:00am – 12:00pm  
Circulated:  
Approved:

**Present:** Robert Ploutz-Snyder (Chair), Rebecca Cunningham (VP for Research), Natalie Colabianchi, Vania Hinkovska-Galcheva, Claudia Figueroa-Romero, Vilma Mesa, Nathan Qi, Yulia Sevryugina, Jessica Durkin, Elizabeth Devlin

**Absent:** Marilia Cascalho, Elena Gallo, Marouane Kessentini, Hafiz Malik, Vitaliy Popov, Teri Rosales, Hakam Tiba, Jay Vornhagen,

**Guests:** *Karl Jepsen, Professor, Depts of Orthopaedic Surgery and Biomedical Engineering, Associate Dean for Research, Medical School Chair, Laboratory and Research Safety Committee; Danielle Sheen, Executive Director, Environment, Health & Safety*

Chair Ploutz-Snyder called the meeting to order at 11:08am, welcomed the committee and gave a brief overview of the agenda. The committee approved the minutes from the December 2021 meeting.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder welcomed the guest speakers and turned over the floor to them.

### [Laboratory and Research Safety Committee](#)

*Karl Jepsen, Professor, Depts of Orthopaedic Surgery and Biomedical Engineering, Associate Dean for Research, Medical School Chair, Laboratory and Research Safety Committee; Danielle Sheen, Executive Director, Environment, Health & Safety*

Executive Director Sheen gave the committee an overview of the laboratory research safety initiative. She shared that it is a tiered oversight structure to create a research safety committee that interacts with executive leadership and various parties throughout the team structure.

Executive Director Sheen shared that Phase 1 of the program (2014-2019) was building the infrastructure for this effort. The effort starting in 2020 was focused on creating an inspection ready safety culture. They have formalized their safety accountability plans for all these units and had deans and directors designate a safety accountability lead for each unit. They have also developed scorecards with the rationale that this will have actionable items to move progress forward. They currently have 11 of the 14 plans submitted and are working to complete the remaining three. They will be launching a marketing and communications safety campaign in the coming months.

Associate Dean Jepsen invited the committee's feedback on how to improve communication around leadership messaging, and how to target day to day safety mentality as a culture for faculty, staff, and trainees in the next phase. He also invited questions from the committee members.



The committee gave some suggestions such as increasing the visibility of safety discussions, having curriculum available centered on safety for students and GSI's, and online educational tools.

Associate Dean Jepsen indicated that plans do include what to do in terms of communication and education. He indicated that providing more visibility for these topics and having this become part of the initial risk assessment at project initiation is something they will pursue. They are expanding the online educational tools they have available. They will also expand in training in the lab and confirming the training ensures that individuals are able to conduct risky methods in a safe way.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder thanked the guest speakers and asked any further questions to be submitted in the chat and they will be passed on to the guest speakers. He opened the floor to VP Cunningham.

### **Pandemic Relief Program**

*Rebecca Cunningham, Vice President for Research*

VP Cunningham shared that OVPR will be launching a new pandemic relief program for faculty. The provost's office will also be launching a pandemic relief program that she will briefly touch upon.

The faculty relief program will be a modest program available across all three campuses across all disciplines and colleges. Based on the feedback OVPR gathered using focus groups and surveys, although funding can be an issue some faculty who are unable to spend the funds due to restrictions. OVPR plans to offer a suite of services that is targeted to help with research recovery for faculty. <https://research.umich.edu/pandemic-relief-program/>

VP Cunningham shared that the program will roll out Mid-March and run for one year.

She indicated that the provost will also have a program that will provide tenure track assistant professors who have not had external funding a level of \$3,000. She shared with the committee that faculty will be able to apply to both the OVPR and provost's relief fund programs. VP Cunningham shared that they are finalizing minor revisions to the program and will take the committee's feedback to add some language explaining the rationale for different funding available to the different tenured ranks.

Chair Ploutz-Snyder encouraged the committee to submit topics for future discussion or feedback on the topics discussed today to share with VP Cunningham.

The meeting adjourned at 11:59am.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Devlin  
Faculty Senate Office