

MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2009

Internal Proposal Deadline

Effective May 1, 2009 the Sponsored Programs Office is implementing an internal deadline for all external proposal submissions. (See hand out for specific details). This information has been disseminated to the academic deans, department chairs, center and institute directors. There have also been discussions at the dean and department chair levels. For campus wide distribution the information is posted on the VP for Research website and has also been communicated through a TechToday article. Exceptions will be limited; however the staff will work closely with the campus community. In comparison, other universities are doing 10-15 day deadlines on the most highly competitive opportunities.

Stimulus Funding

Dave spoke with the National Science Foundation program manager who was visiting on campus today. The NSF has received 3 billion in funding. There is 2 billion in funds to be distributed across programs that will mostly be used for previously rejected proposals and 1 billion for new programs. The 2 billion is to be distributed before July 2009 and NSF is currently contacting principle investigators. There is only one Michigan Tech researcher that we are aware of, who has been contacted regarding funding of his previously rejected proposal. It is unknown when the other 1 billion will be distributed. They have also received an increase in their base budget in 2009 and 2010. The second MRI solicitation will be released soon, and may include changes. It is known that each agency is distributing the stimulus funds differently.

NSF Senior Project Personnel Salaries & Wages Policy (Faculty two-month salary):

The current NSF policy on faculty two month salaries is not a new policy and was revised in January 2009. Salary was restricted to summer months but now is allowed to be taken at anytime. Release time taken during the school year on an NSF project cannot be taken during the summer months. Our Sponsored Programs and Human Resources offices are monitoring this release time during the academic year, and beginning in the fall of 2009 notices will be sent out to project PI's summarizing their NSF payroll activity so they are aware of what time has been used and what time is available. In the future it might be necessary to have those who are receiving more than two months salary during the summer sign an acknowledgement of these amounts. Those with multiple grants allowing release time are encouraged to distribute the two months of salary among several grants.

Research Integrity and Compliance

Joanne Polzien, director of Research Integrity and Compliance provided a report to the committee on the IRB process. In the last nine years Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews have risen from 10 to 118 new human subject research protocols submitted per year. Currently there are 152 active protocols. IRB reviews fall into three categories: administrative, expedited, and full. The administrative review process is in place to address those reviews which only require the director's approval. Administrative reviews do not involve the board and are independently approved by the RIC office. As an example, some social and behavioral projects can have an initial review in the office and may be approved based on limited risk (such as some oral history projects or simple surveys) and the determination that they fall within categories determined to be exempt. Twenty-nine protocols fell into the expedited category and 69% of those were approved within 1 week. The remaining protocols required further clarification before approval could be granted. So far this year ten applications have required the full IRB approval. 60% of these were approved within one month, one was approved within five weeks; two within six weeks; and one application took five months to approve due to research involvement with Portage Health System. Ten applications were withdrawn due to no funding or the study not being well designed. In terms of research being conducted without proper IRB approval, ten protocols were submitted after the start date of the project. There was one student who collected human subject data without approval (although the student indicated that approval was granted) and was required to discard the accumulated data. A question was asked as to whether the senior design and enterprise projects are included in this data and Joanne confirmed that yes those projects are included. A question was raised regarding membership of the IRB; the concern was that social science processes dominated by physicians can make the student work virtually impossible. This was addressed by putting the administrative review process in place. Joanne stated the IRB consists of 2 physicians, 1 attorney, 1 rehab specialist, 4 faculty, 1 staff, and a non-affiliated member as required by federal regulation. A question was asked about the length of time it takes for some student research projects. Joanne replied that there have been some instances of students indicating to their advisor that they submitted information to the RIC office on a certain date when in fact it had been submitted many weeks after the indicated date. The RIC office strives to assist researchers in the IRB process but must still follow regulations. Joanne or Susie Amato (IRB chair), are always available to speak to departments and faculty.

BOC

Dave Reed distributed the research information that will be reported to the Board of Control on May 1st. There were no questions regarding this data.

Other Business

Keweenaw Research Center has been entering their payroll timesheets manually and has experienced an increased work load due to the time consuming data entry of the numerous project index numbers for each employee. It is also the responsibility of the department to correct certain types of errors such as if the payroll staff data enters the timesheet index numbers incorrectly. This may only be a concern of those departments who are highly involved in research. Jay Meldrum will set-up a meeting with Bob Suomis.

Graduate Student Data

Jackie Huntoon provided a Graduate School Data Tracking handout to the council which summarizes the data she would like to have tracked. There currently is a report which tracks recruitment of graduate students but is done on a university level. There has been a request to have this information reported at both the college and department levels. This has been looked into however at this time this information is from a data warehouse and basically it would take great effort to capture the data properly. There is a move to improve the dashboard as a whole. The handout provided gives a list of items that the graduate school would like to be able to generate in the future as a part of their growth management. For planning purposes this information would be very beneficial. International student data is the most thoroughly reported data thus far. Yield rates track the yield of the various types of students and assists in determining where to appropriately place resources for recruiting. It was noted that it would be beneficial to determine where the Graduated students who declined our offer actually end up attending graduate school. Dave Reed suggested that these issues should be addressed at the dean and chair levels and they could assist in determining the priority of what should be developed and the time line of that development. He also recommended that the deans move forward with these issues and provide their requests to the Chief Information Officer.

The RAC will adjourn for the summer months and resume meetings at the start of the Fall Semester. Have a safe and happy summer!