

MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 13, 2005

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

ROOM 305 ADMIN

X	Cathy Banfield, Vice President for Research-Sub Cheryl Kiley	A	Bruce Seely, Social Science	X	Anita Quinn, Research & Sponsored Programs
X	Don Beck, Physics	X	Terry McNinch, Civil & Environmental Engineering	A	Martyn Smith, Graduate School
A	Peg Gale, Forest Resources & Environmental Science	X	Soner Onder, Computer Science	X	Dave Reed, Chair, Vice President for Research
A	Neil Hutzler, College of Engineering	X	Joanne Polzien, Research Compliance	X	Julie Seppala, Research Accounting
A	Dave Karnosky, Forest Resources & Environmental Science	X	Kurt Pregitzer, Graduate Faculty Council	A	James Wood, Geo & Mining Engineering

MINUTES

GACS

A sub-committee was formed to review the GACS process. The goals of the committee were to streamline the process and to reduce the duplication of effort between all departments. The nomination form was eliminated. Prior practice was that an account would not be set up & no support money would be distributed without the nomination form. Monies were not allowed to be transferred by Julie. Problems: Graduate School support on sponsored project, not spending money on what they should, cost share becoming a requirement.

After much discussion, a more streamlined process has been developed that should alleviate a lot of manual tracking.

Anita stated that the new process is not perfect, but is an improvement. Unspent money greater than \$1,500.00 would have to go through the Budget Modification Form process in order to be spent and another source for the cost share would have to be specified.

Kurt Pregitzer stated that the problem is two-fold: 1) it takes time to recruit and; 2) also meet the expectations of the sponsor. The beginning and ending dates of the Graduate Students do not coincide with the award dates. PI's expect to spend the money any way they want. The PI's need to meet the expectations of the sponsors.

Cost share is tied into Grad money. Sponsor does not care if the money is spent out of MTU funds, but the Grad school does.

Account Numbers on Multiple Year Grants – Kurt Pregitzer

New account numbers on additional funding is cumbersome. Julie explained the difference between year one and year two and the need for new budget numbers. Outside sources require MTU to site a specific budget period; therefore, in order to track expenditures, a new budget number is created with each increment of money.

(PIs) are committed to come up with the money, contracted to do so, but are spending the money on something else, like equipment.

Julie also stated in 15 months the new cost share increments will be coming out.

Sponsors are asking for complete copies of work. Research Accounting has to make copies and submit per request. The sponsor expects MTU to have this information

available. One sponsor asked for details on how and what task were completed, and they use a time log, so that with any request they can just print off what has been done.

Julie said paperwork has to be kept for 3 years from the final payment; 7 years just to be safe, and at least 4 years from end date. Procurement card records have to be retained for 7 years, so if a project includes procurement card receipts, they must be retained for 7 years.

Unpaid Receivables Due to Technical Report Issues

Julie Seppala stated a notice is sent to the Sponsor at 30 days & 60 days or older if the sponsor has not paid. After 90 days, a notice is sent to the PI and the Chair. After 120 days, a notice is sent to the PI, Chair and Dean. Most of the time, the invoices are not being paid due to late Technical Reports. At this time, the total receivables are down, things are looking good, and there are not a lot of outstanding invoices. Julie asked the RAC's opinion on whether or not 30 days is too soon to send a notice to the PI and how far is too far to push to see why the invoice has not been paid. The Faculty at the meeting said that the 30 day notice is just thrown in the trash. It was suggested to make a change to the 30 day invoice, and include a statement for the PI as to why the invoice has not been paid. This information would allow the PI to call the sponsor and find out why the invoice has not been paid and then notify Research Accounting. There also has to be a limit on the dollar amount of the unpaid invoice, because \$1.90 is not enough money to waste our staff time trying to determine why it is not paid. At the same time, if there is an over draw by a certain dollar amount; take it out of the account. In the end, the account has to be brought to a zero balance.

Payroll Certification Process

There is an enormous amount of paperwork. Payroll Certification Form signing is time consuming. Electronic signature was discussed, but it is not a valid form of signature per the Federal Government. Julie stated that if time cards were signed by the employees, the payroll certification process would not be necessary. It was suggested to contact another out-of-state university to see how they were handling signatures for the payroll certifications, to see if we could improve our procedure.