

**Senate Research Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
March 2, 2015**

[These notes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

In these minutes: [Uniform Guidance policy update; risk banding for lab audits; measuring faculty research productivity]

PRESENT: Maria Gini, chair; Teresa Rose-Hellecant, Brian Johnston, Carol Carrier (for Al Levine), James Orf, Daniel Habchi, Seung Ho Joo, Michael Kyba, Nicole Victoria, Bill Arnold, Tommy Vaughan, Beth Stadler, Frances Lawrenz, Scott McIvor, Jeanette Gundel, Phil Herald, Brian Herman, Philip Zelazo

REGRETS: LaDora Thompson, Elizabeth Steinert, Suzanne Paulson, Hinh Ly, Bob Lewis, Murat Can Kalem

ABSENT: Joel Waldfoegel, Tucker LeBien, Michael Schmitt, Lynn Zentner

GUESTS: Nicole Pilman, implementation coordinator, Uniform Guidance; Pamela Webb, associate vice president, Sponsored Projects Administration; Joe Klancher, research safety program manager, University Health and Safety; Betty Kupskey, Interim Director of Biosafety & Occupational Health/Biosafety Officer, University Health and Safety

Professor Gini welcomed the committee.

1. Uniform Guidance policy update

Gini welcomed Nicole Pilman, implementation coordinator, Uniform Guidance, and Pamela Webb, associate vice president, Sponsored Projects Administration, who updated the committee on the uniform guidance (UG) policy. They directed the committee's attention to a presentation and reviewed highlights.

Uniform Guidance will apply to:

- All new and renewal awards issued (even if costed/budgeted and submitted under the old rules)
- UMN's upcoming F&A rate proposal (to be submitted Spring 2015 against a FY14 base year)
- Single (A-133) Audit for UMN's FY16 (July 2015-June 2016)

Old rules will apply to:

- All active awards that do not get incremental funding or another award action (until they expire)
 - Uniform Guidance may apply to:

- All non-competing awards (agencies may decide on a case-by-case basis)

What rules apply:

- Previous Federal Research Terms and Conditions are now obsolete and are not yet re-released under the UG
- Agencies are instead applying:
 - The parts of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that codify their implementation of the Uniform Guidance
 - Their own internal Policy Statements or Grants Manuals
 - Some of these aren't yet released (including the NIH Grants Policy Statement)
- Eight agencies intend to migrate back to the Federal Research Terms and Conditions when they are ready

Webb reviewed new or revised common uniform guidance terms:

- Allocable computer devices deemed essential and with unit cost less than \$5,000 may be direct charged
- Fixed price subawards need prior agency approval
- Fixed price (sub)awards must be certified complete at project end or the (sub)award amount must be adjusted
- Prior agency approval needed for direct charging of administrative or clerical salaries not identified in the approved budget
- Prior agency approval needed for adding or rebudgeting into participant support costs
- Publication costs or costs to share results may be charged up to 60 days after the award end date
- Subaward invoices that are proper need to be paid within 30 days
- Awards must be closed out within 90 days (same rule as before but more emphasis on enforcement now)

Webb discussed possible UG issues, saying that prior approval may be needed for subawards, especially if they are not in the proposal. Additionally, prior approval by the agency will be required if key personnel has been named by a researcher in the proposal but not the award and their effort is reduced by 25%.

Webb and Pilman emphasized people could contact Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) for assistance, and could also go to the web page for more information:
<http://www.ospa.umn.edu/documents/UG.html>.

Gini thanked Webb and Pilman for the information.

2. Risk banding for lab audits

Gini welcomed Joe Klancher, research safety program manager, University Health and Safety, and Betty Kupskey, Interim Director of Biosafety & Occupational Health/Biosafety Officer, University Health and Safety, who discussed risk banding for lab audits. Klancher noted that in the past, biosafety and research safety audits have been conducted separately at the University of

Minnesota. Auditing is a key component of any safety program and is particularly critical in university research environment where there is diffuse supervision and a high rate of turnover among graduate students. The University Health and Safety (UHS) has taken on responsibility to establish a coordinated auditing program integrating both biosafety and research safety components.

Klancher distributed information to the committee, saying the program aims to:

- Reduce time commitment on principal investigators (PIs) and departmental research safety officers
- Ensure all laboratories are audited on a risk-based frequency
- Establish, measure, and communicate performance metrics
- Establish a process to facilitate continuous improvement
- Educate lab personnel in basic laboratory safety procedures
- Augment existing supervision in the research community
- Instill accountability for safety and compliance with laboratory personnel
- Build safety advocacy among all participants
- Cross-train biosafety and research safety specialists

Kupskay and Klancher went on to describe the process to the committee:

1. Performance expectations are distributed to every laboratory in the form of a self-inspection tool. The self-inspection tool includes detailed reference information explaining the requirements, and is intended for laboratories to use for self-management and training of research personnel prior to visits from the audit team.
2. Biosafety and Research Safety staff partner with departmental RSOs to schedule and perform audits of laboratory.
3. The audit team inspects the laboratory and gathers information on 16 key safety performance indicators. The indicators are intended to represent basic safety items that provide an indication of overall laboratory safety performance.
4. Audits are approximately 20 minutes or longer as laboratory staff are encouraged to ask questions and receive guidance from DEHS personnel on safety relevant topics.
5. DEHS staff provides laboratory contacts and PIs a written summary of audit findings along with a 30 day deadline to address deficiencies.
6. DEHS records and tracks audit results as well as laboratory responses.
7. DEHS tabulates and distributes metrics to university and departmental leadership, and others as appropriate.

Klancher said 900 audits were conducted in 2014, and received responses from all but 14 labs. He discussed ongoing efforts which included continuing to establish a network for distribution and use of metrics, and the possibility of a laboratory recognition program.

The committee asked how the audits fit with federal guidelines, and Klancher said audits comply with OSHA, among other regulations. Klancher emphasized that the idea was to assist people in complying and that it was a collaborative, not a policing, endeavor. Brief training sessions are done on the spot if something is found during a visit. To the committee's concerns, Klancher acknowledged that some parts of compliance are onerous, but they were working to reduce the

burdens on PIs. The committee asked about facilities that needed fundamental upgrades because of their age, and Klancher said they got involved with the design teams for new construction to ensure they are built appropriately. Older buildings, Kupskay acknowledged, were challenging. Gini asked how many labs there were and their size. Klancher said there were labs on both Twin Cities campuses, about one-third of them in AHC, and they might be quite large or be as small as one bench in a shared space.

Gini thanked Klancher and Kupskay for the information.

3. Measuring faculty research productivity

Gini said in 2012, the Senate Research Committee wrote a resolution on how scholarship was measured (www1.umn.edu/usenate/resolutions/committees/productivity.pdf) and said the committee should revisit the idea and look at ways to improve the criteria.

The committee spent considerable time discussing the issue. It was observed that different departments have different metrics. The committee noted that scholarship and research at the University was not just productive, it was efficient and a good return on investment. The question was raised about for whom the metrics were established, as they are going to be different for the general public versus within the institution.

Vice president Herman said the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) had been considering this as well. He noted that in science, sometimes things are measured just because they can be and it creates a “rat race.” Herman said while it may be easier to measure productivity in the sciences, to truly value the University comprehensively the arts and humanities must be reflected as well. It is an era of increased scrutiny, and less money meant more accountability. Herman said the major challenge was measuring the true impact of things that are more qualitative vs. quantitative, yet still add value. The goal is to articulate and measure the impact of the University’s mission.

The committee noted several things:

- There are biases about productivity: in some departments, faculty must publish; yet in the arts and humanities, it isn’t always clear how to measure it.
- It might be useful to find out which things matter to whom.
- A good way to measure the impact on society is to ask society, in trying to address what it needs and wants.
- If the public is shown the value, it is easier to understand.
- Research results aren’t effectively communicated to press outlets. There should be ways to make scholarship and research results more visible.
- There are metrics everyone uses, but are there should be ways to improve internal metrics.
- There are also the metrics of students who are contributing to research efforts.

Herman noted that discussions around these issues were occurring with University leadership, and encouraged committee members to contribute to the discussions.

Hearing no further business, Gini adjourned the meeting.

Mary Jo Pehl
University Senate