Senate Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT)
October 18, 2016
Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes 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 minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Overview of Research Administrative Systems; SPA/EGMS Overview; Compliance, IACUC, eProtocol Overview; IRB Click Overview; Committee on Committees Review]

PRESENT: Geoffrey Ghose (chair), William Dana, Santiago Fernandez-Giminez, Kate McCready, Timothy Nichols, Robert Rubinyi, Nancy Carpenter, Michelle Driessen, Kristin Janke, Karen Monsen, Yoichi Watanabe, Madeline Boak

REGRETS: Diane Willow, Charles Miller, Al Beitz, John Butler, Kate Martin

ABSENT: Carlos Soria, Bernard Gulachek, Brandon Vanderbush, Rajkumar Vyas

GUESTS: Thierry Boudet, information technologies director, OVPR; Pamela Webb, associate vice president for research, OVPR; April Coon, assistant director, Sponsored Projects; Frances Lawrenz, associate vice president for research, OVPR; Ben Clark, assistant director, OVPR; Linnea Anderson, chief of staff, Human Research Protection Program; Sarah Chambers, professor, College of Liberal Arts; Ann Waltner, professor, CLA

OTHERS: Sarah Waldemar (OVPR), Rachel Edwards (CSENG Biomedical Engineering)

Chair Geoffrey Ghose welcomed the committee and members introduced themselves.

1. Overview of research administrative systems – Ghose introduced Thierry Boudet, information technologies director, Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). Boudet began his presentation by explaining that the University research community interacts with the OVPR in several ways: through research compliance and training, IP management and technology transfer, research engagement, outreach, and economic development, business operations and administration, awards and sponsored funds, funding opportunities and pre-award support, and scholarly activity and research networking. The OVPR works with a coordinate network of interdependent and complimentary teams, Boudet said, including University partners (such as the Office of Information Technology, University Libraries, University Finance, Enterprise Data Management and Reporting, among others) and external partners (vendors, other Big 10 institutions, contractors, etc.). In setting the system priorities and roadmap, the OVPR seeks feedback on business drivers from the state and federal governments, the University research community, the University of Minnesota Strategic Plan and priorities, and the OVPR Strategic Plan and priorities. Technology drivers are primarily led by University technology decisions and changes, global technology trends, technology forecasting, and IT governance priorities, Boudet added.

The systems being reviewed today, Boudet said, are eProtocol, IACUC (a part of OVPR research compliance and training), Click IRB/IRB Renew project (part of awards and sponsored funds), and EGMA replacement/MN-GEMS project (a part of funding opportunities and pre-award support).

2. eProtocol IACUC, IBC, and CS overview – Boudet introduced Frances Lawrenz, associate vice president for research, OVPR, and Ben Clark, assistant director, OVPR. Clark said that eProtocol is the management tool for the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) and use of controlled substances in research. eProtocol uses a secure online application process which coordinates submission, review, and approval of research protocols. Another important feature of eProtocol, Clark said, is that it includes committee management and meeting management systems. Clark added that the text and structure of the forms are editable by the institution to allow for a certain level of customization.

IACUC has over 1500 submissions per year submitted by over 400 principal investigators and over 2000 lab personnel, and over 800 submissions per year are newly approved protocols. User groups of eProtocol include researchers and lab staff, IACUC members, University animal care personnel, and University administrative and compliance staff. By law, animal research is tightly regulated, Clark said, and administrative and compliance staff are required to perform inspections, conduct reviews, and send reports to the USDA.

In the future, Clark said, the OVPR is seeking to incorporate the University's ideas into the standard eProtocol base product, and continuing to meet monthly with the vendor. Additionally, in November, OVPR-IT, IACUC, and IBC will meet to discuss potential future enhancements to the program. Clark said that other enhancements that have been discussed are the creation of tutorials for principal investigators to better understand how to better use eProtocol, a streamlining/automation of the reports sent to the USDA, and improvement of the reporting functionality in the system, thereby relieving administrative burden.

Ghose asked Clark to expand on the standardization of eProtocol, and asked specifically why the University moved away from a system that was customized to one that is standardized. Clark responded that through working with the eProtocol vendor, the University's requested customizations were actually put into use as the standard model for all institutions. Clark added that standardization can help with troubleshooting issues in the system, whereas customization can slow help received from the vendor. If many institutions are having the same issue, Clark said, it is faster and more efficient for the vendor to help the largest group first.

Michelle Driessen asked how Unizin might come into play with eProtocol. Clark responded that the use of eProtocol and similar systems is not consistent enough throughout the Big 10 institutions, as all may use different systems, making it unsuitable for Unizin. Bob Rubinyi added that the focus of Unizin is specifically on academic technology, not on research technology.

Ghose asked Clark if there was any data for users on the submission side (specifically how long it takes to fill out forms, submit, and receive revision requests or approval). Clark replied that

currently eProtocol does not have this functionality; right now, the clock starts as soon as the form is submitted, so there is not data on how long the form takes to fill out.

Rachel Edwards, graduate student from the Senate Research Committee (SRC), asked Clark how often administrators sit down with those on IACUC and with principal investigators to get feedback on protocols. Clark replied that often administrators will meet with principal investigators to assist with their protocols; OVPR also gives presentations to graduate programs and biology labs on the historical background of research compliance and how we do things at our institution.

Edwards said that her principal investigator had issues with the initial submission of his research protocols through eProtocol; specifically, he needed to re-enter all aspects of his protocols by hand, creating administrative burden and taking a significant amount of time. Clark replied that they are working with the eProtocol vendor on creation of a "clone" functionality, which would solve this issue.

3. SPA/EGMS overview – Pamela Webb, associate vice president for research, and April Coon, assistant director, Sponsored Projects, provided an overview of Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)/Electronic Grants Management System (EGMS) and the MN-GEMS (MN-Grants Electronic Management System) Discovery project.

Webb explained that MN-GEMS is the replacement for EGMS, and includes some features unavailable in EGMS. MN-GEMS will be the one system that SPA uses, and will have the ability to interact with the 75 other systems used by different funding agencies. This simplified system will greatly reduce the administrative burden of dealing with several different systems, Webb said.

Next, Webb reviewed a summary of core functionality requirements for the system. The likely scope of MN-GEMS includes preparation for sponsored proposals, proposal review and submission, award acceptance, subawards, and unfunded research agreements. Anticipated functionality includes:

- Electronic access to Federal Funding Opportunity Announcement packages
- Interface with other University core data sets (including appointment data, payroll, effort commitments, human and animal subjects systems, F&A and fringe benefit tables, etc.)
- Electronic routing of approvals
- Tracking of SPA's proposal review process
- Electronic (database-to-database) proposal submission to agencies
- Electronic tracking of proposals undergoing agency reviews
- Receipt of electronic awards
- Award negotiation and acceptance tracking
- Data exchanges with other University data systems (Enterprise Financial System, IRB Renew, eProtocol, etc.
- Sponsored project proposal and award data (for reporting, for portals)
- Subaward issuance and management

- Tracking of incoming Material Transfer Agreements, Confidentiality Agreements, Data Use Agreements, and $0 Collaboration Agreements

This new system will be advantageous to faculty in several ways, Webb said. There will be reduced administrative burden for creating and submitting sponsored proposals, and an extended ability to work on proposal science (rather than having to stop research three to five days ahead of the deadline). Faculty will also be able to track the proposal review process through some federal agencies, Webb said, which provides transparency to the awards and negotiation process. There is the potential for faster award set up, and the ability to link projects across University systems (human subjects, animals subjects, etc.), Web added.

Faculty will be involved in the discovery phase of MN-GEMS through participation in the MN-GEMS Faculty Advisor Group, starting in late fall 2016. Nominations for this group are currently coming in, Webb said, and the role of the group will be to provide input on project specifications and scope, participate in product reviews and the selection of a vendor, and, if needed, prioritize which specifications are most important. Faculty will also be asked to participate in focus groups for the full project, Webb added.

Webb then reviewed the proposed timeline for MN-GEMS; the discovery phase will take place from 2016 through 2017, where the scope and high-level business requirements of the project will be identified, the advisory structure will be set up, potential vendors will be identified, the projects phases and budget will be created, and funding will be obtained.

Ghose asked Webb what the total timeline for the project was. Webb responded that the transition should realistically be completed in three years. William Dana asked what would take place in phases one, two, and three of the project, as noted in the timeline. Webb said that OVPR was not yet certain; the discovery phase will help to identify these items.

Nancy Carpenter asked how system campuses were involved with this project. Webb replied that on both the Morris and Duluth campuses, faculty will participate fully in focus groups and meetings; additionally, Webb said, there is a Grants Manager User Network which includes system campus members. The other campuses, Webb added, use the Twin Cities as their SPA office.

4. Click IRB – Linnea Anderson, chief of staff, Human Research Protection Program, provided an overview of Click IRB and the IRB Renew Project. Anderson said that the IRB reviews approximately 1,275 unique submissions per month, including new applications, changes in protocols, continuing review submissions, and report forms. There are ten IRB panels, eight of which review biomedical submissions, and two of which review social behavior submissions. There are approximately 30 staff members who pre-review all submissions.

Anderson then reviewed the basic IRB workflow with the committee. Initially, a researcher submits their protocols to the IRB and completes a brief smart form to capture reportable information. The IRB staff then completes a pre-review of the protocols to determine the risk level and review findings; staff will then request missing items or clarification of concerns in advance of the IRB review. The protocols are next assigned for review based on the

determination of risk; the committee reviews the protocols, and communicates approval or requests modifications from the researcher.

Anderson said that currently, there are a few challenges with the IRB process, including limited opportunities for integration with other systems, limited reporting capabilities, a lack of transparency, and antiquated and inefficient systems which are labor-intensive and make compliance more difficult. Click IRB will create a common space for researchers, IRB staff, and IRB members. In the new system, researchers will upload a study protocol and complete a short smart form. IRB staff will then complete pre-review of the protocols, and document key aspects of the study. Reviewers will access materials within Click IRB, and all correspondence between researchers, staff, and IRB members will be captured in Click IRB. Researchers and study team members will have ready access to review the approval status and approved study documents in Click IRB. This will increase opportunities for integration with other Enterprise systems, expand reporting capabilities, create a common workspace where processes and status are transparent, create intuitive, right-sized technology, facilitate compliance, and eliminate duplication of effort, Anderson said.

Anderson said that the OVPR had created several options for community engagement in the Click IRB process: participation in the User Community Advisory Group, in usability testing, and through ancillary review participation. Additionally, OVPR will provide dedicated personnel to facilitate training and communication, and put out a monthly newsletter. Anderson added that the new template will be rolled out in the next few months. As time had run out for this agenda item, Ghose advised committee members to send any questions on Click IRB to Anderson via email.

5. Committee on Committees review – Anne Waltner, professor, College of Liberal Arts, member, Senate Committee on Committees (C on C), and Sarah Chambers, professor, College of Liberal Arts, member, C on C, advised the committee that the C on C reviews committees every five years; they noted that they were attending today to glean feedback from the committee on their membership and charge to see if there should be any revisions.

Kate McCready said that she had been on SCIT for three years, and noted that the committee is made up of others besides faculty. She said that sometimes the focus of the committee was very much on faculty issues. Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez said that the committee could do a better job of advising visitors of the committee composition when inviting them to present. McCready said that she would like to perhaps see the committee do a year-long deep dive on a single issue, which might have a greater effect.

Ghose said that the committee scope was very broad, since information technologies expand to every aspect of the University and are constantly changing. Waltner asked if it would be helpful to create subcommittees of SCIT to address this issue. Ghose agreed that this may be beneficial in the area of educational technologies, where more student input would be helpful.

Robert Rubinyi asked Waltner and Chambers about what is typical of senate committees; are many other groups putting forth resolutions and statements? Chambers replied that the work of SCIT is representative of what is done in most committees.

Chambers asked the committee if they felt their consultative charge was working as it should. Fernandez-Gimenez replied that yes, most of the time the committee is consulted before items move forward. Dana wondered about the influence of the committee and how that was measured. As time had run out for this agenda item, Ghose advised committee members to send Chambers and Waltner additional comments via email.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Barbara Irish
University Senate Office