

**Senate Research Committee (SRC)**  
**March 23, 2020**  
**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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.*

[**In these minutes:** Policy Consultation: Traveling on University Business; COVID-19 Updates]

**PRESENT:** Julie Olson (chair), Bill Arnold, Carol Carrier, Gregory Cuomo, Kelsie Full, Sumanth Gopinath, Lisa Johnston, Diana Karwarn, Leslie Kennedy, Katsumi Matsumoto, Dianne Neumark Sztainer, Matt Pappas, Nicole Pilman, Shashi Shekhar, Susannah Smith, Kathleen Vohs, Carston Wagner, Pamela Webb, Phil Zelazo

**ABSENT:** John Freeman, Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, Nelson Rhodus, David Roberts, Terese Rose-Hellekant, Daniel Heemstra, Ali Salavati, Vaybhav Shaw

**GUESTS:** Beth Tapp, interim director, Purchasing Services; Nicole Pilman, director, Sponsored Financial Reporting; Amy Kircher, senior advisor, Food Protection and Defense Institute; Seth Beccard, associate administrator, Office of Institutional Compliance; Jon Guden, associate program director, Conflict of Interest Program

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Ned Patterson, Brianne Keeney, Mark Rova

Chair Julie Olson welcomed the committee and the members introduced themselves.

**1. Policy Consultation: Traveling on University Business**

Beth Tapp, interim director, Purchasing Services, presented slides titled [Traveling on University Business](#) and explained that most of the policy has been revised or changed. She said one main reason for all of the changes was to improve the flow of the policy. She also acknowledged that a significant change was a new requirement that expenses be submitted for approval 60 days from the expense date, rather than 60 days from the end date of travel.

Members offered the following feedback:

- Committee members would prefer to only have to use Chrome River once per trip, which will not align with the new submittal requirement, in most cases.
- Members did not like the new language that states that transportation to and from meals will not be reimbursed. Members expressed that this is a necessary expense.
- Members commented that the dependent care expense language is very clear.
- Members explained that the policy should allow people to decide to drive rather than fly.
- Members requested clarification about what a “traveler” is in the language referring to sharing rooms.

- Members discussed the prohibition on sharing rooms and some members commented that this new requirement will limit opportunities when the department cannot afford to pay for additional rooms.

Tapp thanked members for the feedback and explained that the policy will go through the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and the President's Policy Committee (PPC), and will then be posted for a 30-day review before it is finalized.

## **2. COVID-19 Updates**

Olson began the COVID-19 updates by explaining the current status of research animals. She told members that if a shelter-in-place order is issued from the governor, then animal caretakers in the university labs, currently considered non-essential workers, would be unable to report to campus, and therefore unable to care for the animals. Olson explained that up to 80% of animals may be euthanized as a result. She reported that faculty members have researched how universities in other states with current shelter-in-place orders have handled this issue, and have submitted a letter to Chris Cramer, vice president for research, and President Gabel, outlining their concerns, and explaining how other universities are handling this issue. Olson told members that there are currently a limited number of "priority stay" tags that researchers have been instructed to label on cages to avoid some euthanizations.

Amy Kircher, senior advisor, Food Protection and Defense Institute, told members that she is working on COVID-19 related issues on behalf of the Office for the Vice President for Research, and she explained that the Governor's office asked the University to identify essential staff, and Cramer included animal caretakers in the list of essential staff. Olson also said that the deans were asked to make a list of essential employees in their colleges.

Regarding labs doing COVID-19 related research, Kircher said that these projects have been moved to top priority, and the research will continue. Pamela Webb, associate vice president, Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA), said the same is true for sponsored projects.

Pamela provided the following SPA updates:

- The SPA office has posted [COVID-19 guidance for the research community](#), which include:
  - [Steps for Research Resumption](#)
  - [Ensuring Safe Conduct On-Site](#)
  - [Resuming Research in Shared Spaces](#)
  - [Human Participant Research](#)
  - [Animal Research](#)
  - [Managing Sponsored Projects](#)
- Researchers working remotely may resume their work and charge their projects accordingly.
- SPA recommends that if the nature of a particular project prohibits a researcher from working remotely, then efforts should be made to move that individual to a project that allows for remote work.
- If a researcher is unable to work at all, their salary will continue.

- SPA is giving priority treatment to all COVID-19 projects of any kind.
- SPA has created a new Material Transfer Template that can be used for COVID-19 projects, which can be obtained from SPA staff. This new template will help put new material transfer agreements in place very quickly.

Kircher encouraged researchers to get their labs into hibernation mode. Webb said the SPA office is trying to get all of the federal agencies to have cohesive planning and messaging, which hasn't been the case during all of the pandemic planning.

With no further business, Olson adjourned the meeting.

Bobbie Erichsen  
University Senate Office