

RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2017 MEETING

I. Time, Location and Attendance

- 3:30 PM, Brookside Room at the Administrative Center
- RAC members present: Lawrence Dreyfus, Tony Caruso, John Kevern, James Murowchick, Peter Morello, Mary Walker, Bob Groene, Jenny Lundgren, Chris Holman, Mark Johnson, Jeff Price, Paula Monaghan Nichols, Amanda Emerson, Mark Nichols, Greg Vonnahme, Bob Simmons, Russ Melchert and Leslie Burgess.
- Others in attendance: Jacob Marszalek and Linda Mitchell, FSEC, IFC Representatives

II. Introduction

- Dr. Dreyfus welcomed Linda Mitchell, Faculty Senate Chair, and Jacob Marszalek, IFC representative to the meeting. Newly elected RAC members Amanda Emerson, School of Nursing and Health Studies, and John Kevern, School of Computing and Engineering, were introduced. Simon Friedman, newly elected to represent the School of Pharmacy, was unable to attend.
- Dr. Dreyfus explained that he hopes to have all newly elected members in place by the beginning of 2018, with a first meeting in January. Those members will then elect a new Chair and begin constructing a new charge. He noted that newly elected members are welcome to attend meetings as soon as they are elected, with no need to wait until January.

III. Update on FFE Impact

- A FFE Progress summary was distributed to members which contained progress reports from past grant recipients. Dr. Dreyfus noted that on the second page there is a summary of various impacts made, highlighting the continued gains and achievements made from these initial investments. He said he would like to continue to gather more of this data and provide it to the Provost and Interim Chancellor. Moving forward, this information will be a useful tool in maintaining and leveraging greater funding for the program. He also noted that in creating the FFE program one of the initial goals was to create greater funding opportunities for areas that typically aren't as supported, such the Visual and Performing Arts and Humanities disciplines. He said he was encouraged by the progress and deliverables shown by these areas and looks forward to the overall future of the program. Mark Johnson said he agreed in the importance of continued tracking of this data in years ahead.

IV. Logistics for Reviewing Funding for Excellence Applications

- Dr. Dreyfus explained that historically the reviews have been conducted by assigning applications to members and assembling groups dedicated to each subject area. While it has worked previously, there have been challenges from this design that have made him consider a new method. He said he is going to advocate for the whole council

- reading and reviewing each application. He said the top 10 would possibly be evident by this initial group review and then from there we could move to a more divisive review with the goal of funding as many projects as possible while attempting to maintain the proposed budgets. He asked members for their views on this approach.
- Paula Monaghan Nichols asked if this would be in place of group assignments. Dr. Dreyfus said the group could initially read through them all as a whole and members could then take a lead on several applications. The total review would be responsible by the council as a whole, with the advantage of providing comprehensive feedback to applicants. Dr. Monaghan Nichols said that assigning two experts per proposal would be a good idea for further in depth individual reviews. Dr. Dreyfus responded that this suggestion could certainly be a modification between the two options. He then pointed out another challenge of this committee in regards to its slant toward knowledge in the life sciences, and that we'll need more cross-discipline reviews.
 - Jeff Price asked if the reviews should be completed by the end of October and Dr. Dreyfus said this would be an ideal. Dr. Price noted that he will be reviewing other grants during this time and additional volunteer reviewers may be required to assist the council. Dr. Dreyfus agreed that that is a possibility that may be needed.
 - Tony Caruso noted the past disparities in scoring per discipline, saying the past approach to reviewing didn't necessarily choose the best applications based on the FFE guidelines. He said if the FFE guidelines and goals are the main focus of reviewers each member should be able to assess any application in any field. He pointed to the first two questions on the FFE score rubric as being the primary focus of initial reviews. These ask whether the intended outcomes of the application are well defined and if the intended outcomes align with the FFE goals. He explained that these two questions could differentiate the top applicants with the third question of whether the deliverables are attainable being used for deeper deliberation and discussion. He said the first round of reviews could cut the pool in half leaving the deeper analysis for the top applications.
 - Dr. Monaghan Nichols suggested that given there are 33 applications, the committee could look over each one initially based on these first two rubric questions with each member scoring each proposal. From there, she said, the pool could be narrowed down to the top ten applications, which then get assigned for in depth review. Dr. Johnson agreed to this approach, saying members could provide their scores for the first two questions, with Leslie Burgess recording and adding the scores to conclude the highest and lowest. He said a primary and secondary reviewer could then be assigned to the top applicants.
 - Dr. Dreyfus concluded that this would be an effective method of review and the timeline for deliberation was discussed. It was noted that faculty requesting a release from teaching in their application would need to know ahead of that deadline, which Dr. Mitchell noted being November 15th when spring registration begins. Dr. Johnson suggested having the first round of reviews in by October 15th and then moving on to review the top applicants. It was noted that the RAC meets as a committee to finalize the winners. Dr. Monaghan Nichols suggested that in the first

- round of scoring, the members could be asked to indicate which applications they'd volunteer to review for the final discussion.
- Dr. Dreyfus asked how the group felt about this triage method of evaluation, noting that he liked the approach of asking members to mark which applications they'd like to be a primary or secondary reviewer on. With that data, once the top applications are decided, then they can be assigned for further review, soliciting outside the committee as needed. Jenny Lundgren said that in considering course releases the timeline needs to be defined to having a decision by, at the latest, mid-November. It was decided that the first round of preliminary scoring on questions 1 and 2 be completed by Monday, October 15th. Dr. Johnson suggested that an Excel spreadsheet be used with members sending their responses to Leslie Burgess, with the PI, title, and questions 1 and 2 questions scored on 1(Exceptional) - 9(poor) scale. The members agreed with this method and approach and Dr. Dreyfus said he will email the group soon with the scoring spreadsheet.

V. Research Space Allocation Discussion

- Dr. Dreyfus provided a presentation to begin discussion covering research space allocation, thanking Bob Simmons, Associate Vice Chancellor of Campus Facilities, for attending. He explained that procedures for the implementation of a research space allocation plan are currently being developed and he had distributed the current guidelines, Appendix B of the Research Space Policy, to members for consideration. The procedures to be developed will stipulate how research space is allocated or reallocated within academic units and, where appropriate across academic units.
- The PowerPoint presented can be found on the RAC website at <http://ors.umkc.edu/office-of-research-services/research-advisory-council>
- Dr. Dreyfus reviewed the guiding principles and purposes behind the creation of the document, noting that research space is a limited resource on campus. He said that research space, like all university space, is not owned by an academic unit, department, or division, and that the assignment of space is under the authority Deans as delegated by the Provost. He noted that in regards to research space, one aspect often overlooked by administration is that research space is highly tailored to individual faculty members which makes the process of space allocation challenging. One can't simply borrow another's lab or move out and back into a research space easily.
- Dr. Dreyfus addressed the management of research space, noting that space assigned to individuals should not be considered permanent and that faculty members may be subject to reassignment of research space as a result of inadequate research productivity. This would involve, he said, periodic reviews of space utilization to assess the current and future research space requirements of units and to determine if space is being used efficiently and effectively.
- Members discussed the various ways which productivity can be assessed, from research expenditures to the number of grants awarded down to the number of trained Post-docs, Doctoral, Graduate, and Undergraduate students. Jacob Marszalek asked

if this evaluation would be within units or across campus and Dr. Dreyfus replied that the document would be policy for the whole of campus that is then fine-tuned and individually applied within units.

- Members discussed how policies like this can be used to acquire poorly utilized spaces and there was expressed concern over whether this would make some units, particularly those under Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts, more vulnerable to having space taken away. Dr. Dreyfus explained that the document will be developed and then distributed to Faculty Senate and Deans for thorough evaluation and feedback to ensure all needs are considered. Dr. Mitchell noted that the end result should be a document that is objective rather than subjective, although subjective issues may arise regarding space needs. She explained that altering space is timely and costly and that changing it back once an individual vacates is both as well. Dr. Dreyfus concluded that they are sensitive to the needs of faculty regarding research space and that the goal is to create a document that is privy to those needs while providing structured policies and procedures for when issues arise.
- The group discussed the criteria used for assessing productivity and what constitutes a lack of productivity. The absence of funding for a specified period was noted, and Dr. Dreyfus asked members to consider what this period of time should be: 3 years, 4 years, or 5 years? He suggested using the term “period not exceeding” a certain amount of time and then allowing the units to base it on individual needs.
- The description of what constitutes research space was then discussed and Dr. Dreyfus said there will be a strict definition for this document. Dr. Price suggested obtaining a list of all the research space on campus for the RAC in reviewing this document.
- Dr. Dreyfus concluded that the Deans within each unit will maintain control over research space allocation and the creation of this document is provide proper guidelines for operational procedures. He asked for 3-4 volunteers from the RAC to help with constructing the document and said he will be emailing the PowerPoint to members in the meantime.