Meeting Minutes
Research Board

Date: 23 February, 2012
Time: 1500 - 1630
Location: MAE Conference Room

Present:
Douglas Fouts, interim Dean of Research
Danielle Kuska, Director of RSPO
Jim Newman, SSAG
George Dinolt, Cebrowski Institute
Joel Young, CS
Paul Shebalin, Meyer Institute
Robert Harney, SE
Bruce Denardo, PH
Imre Balogh, MOVES
Anne Clunan, NS
John Colosi, OC/UW
Claudia Luhrs, MAE
Phil Pace, ECE
Qing Wang, MR
Chris Twomey, Faculty Council Rep.

Not Present:
Frank Barrett, GPPAG
Ron Fricker, OR
Stephen Mehay, GSBPP
David Tucker, DA
Amela Sadagic, Faculty Council Rep.
Alex Bordetsky, IS
Pante Stanica, Faculty Council Rep.

COMMUNICATIONS

Douglas Fouts opened the Research Board meeting with the review of minutes from the previous RB meeting. It was decided that any comments or edits could be sent, via email, to Candice Dixon.

Danielle notified the board that she had hired two people for deputy positions in the RSPO. Deborah Shifflett, formerly of the SMART Program, has been assigned Deputy
Director of Sponsored Programs Administration. Sandra Leavitt, formerly of NSA, has accepted the offer of Deputy Director of Research Administration.

Sandra will be taking a look at Thesis Processing due to recent comments made on the customer satisfaction survey. A new lead processor has also been added to the RSPO personnel list with Donna Cuadrez, a former thesis contractor, taking on the role of Director, Thesis Services. These personnel additions will contribute to improvements in several areas.

*Updated Policy Memos*

*Categorization of Sponsored Programs*

There was an update to the policy memo on the categorization of reimbursable activities. The four product lines were defined in Appendix A to the proposal budget guidelines. These definitions have now been placed into policy. The policy now can be found at http://intranet.nps.edu/ResAdmin/FY12/FY12proposalguidelines.html.

*Electronic Proposal Submission*

Danielle reminded the board that the approval of both chair and dean are required on all proposals; including those submitted electronically. In the event that a proposal is received without appropriate signatures, both the chair and dean will be emailed. Often electronic submissions are submitted extremely close to deadline and previously, some were submitted without proper review. In these cases, the appropriate signatures were received after the fact. Recently there was an issue with a proposal that had been submitted without appropriate review. RSPO personnel adhered to the proposed deadline and in this case signatures were not obtained retroactively. The process of retroactive signatures was found insufficient by the Professional Practices Committee. The policy for Electronic Submission can be found at http://intranet.nps.edu/ResAdmin/SPPGM-11-14_.pdf.

*Indirect Update*

In FY13 indirect will be based on labor hours, not labor cost as currently in FY12. The new budget template for FY13 will reflect this change. It is also important to note that there is no longer a “grandfather” policy as in the past, where the rate for the proposal was in effect for the life of the project. NPS argued this point but did not succeed. There are no legal grounds on which NPS can push back.

*Responsible Conduct of Research*

As a result of the American Competes Act, NSF requires that all students, post-docs and other employees working on an NSF project complete Responsible Conduct of Research Training. A policy memo and accompanying form have been drafted. There will be a link to both on the website. There was some discussion about policy in the beginning because
of the verbiage used, ex. “students funded from NSF projects” as our students are at no cost to the project. NPS was first told that the policy might not be applicable, but it is now required. At the time of the board meeting, the memo was with Nancy Haegel and Frank Giraldo, for review. Once reviewed, it will be distributed to all NSF PI’s. Information can be found at [http://intranet.nps.edu/ResAdmin/SPPGM-11-21.pdf](http://intranet.nps.edu/ResAdmin/SPPGM-11-21.pdf)

DISCUSSION

Exceptions to Indirect Cost Policy

In the past, there was a waiver policy for indirect. This is no longer the case. In place of the waiver policy, there will be a policy on exceptions. Danielle added that there are a few exceptions pending for this FY and all exceptions to the current indirect policy will be posted on the Research Board website.

Once the indirect exception form is online, the PI will have to draft of justification for the waiver. The PI will pick the paragraph of existing policy that they take exception to and then justify the reasoning, for the exception. The exception will route through the following individuals: PI→Chair→Dean→VP (Research or Academic Affairs as appropriate)→VP for F&A→Provost→President of NPS. They will hopefully help standardize the process and provide clarification.

Resolution of 10% Issue

PIs were told that a JON couldn’t be established unless 10% of the funding would remain in house. This directive was originally given by the Comptroller but is not in keeping with the policy from FMB. CIRPAS, for example, has 95% of funding directed towards contractors to fly planes. However, this is contract labor in direct support of the sponsored activity. Douglas and Danielle met with the Comptroller due to the fact that the comptroller was not releasing JONs. Some faculty revised their budgets in order to get JONs, an action that Danielle noted she wished hadn’t taken place, as it made the proposal policy a viable option. Guidance was being followed as both contracts agreements and grants are considered in-house support for a project. Ultimately it seems that Kevin Little is working to help, but he is interpreting certain grey areas conservatively. He has asked for clarification from BUPERS on the matter. Danielle stated that she would not pull back on this issue as it would mean that faculty would have to re-do their budgets, thereby creating unnecessary work.

A board member noted that it seems to take weeks to get a JON when initially Comptroller estimated a 5 day waiting period. This creates a problem when the money is here, the proposal submitted, but there is still no JON. It can be particularly troublesome if the individual needs to use the money for travel. Douglas Fouts agreed that there seems to be a lag in the Comptroller and the 5 day period is seldom honored. In the event of urgent travel, every effort is made to assure a JON is established to fund the travel.
Danielle reminded all that a workaround of using another JON, for the travel, and moving costs later must not be used. Besides creating more work, it would be an audit issue.

Douglas Fouts questioned Danielle on the process of creating a JON. Danielle explained that after the proposal leaves our office, the JON will need to be established in STARS, FASDATA, KFS and SLDCADA. Entering into each system can take time. In the past, the JON was provided to PIs before it was even in these systems. The process has slowed considerably now that the JON is being entered prior to release to the individual. Douglas Fouts asked how long it takes for the JON to be entered into each system. When an answer was not readily available, he recommended that some kind of process be calculated to estimate the time needed. A board member noted that the Research Board should make a formal recommendation of this to the administration involved.

Jim Newman followed up on the usage of interim accounts in the future. Will they be allowed in the future? Danielle informed him that Kevin Little has a memo, from FMB, that will prohibit their use. It is something she plans on challenging. The aforementioned memo caused a stir within the Research Board as questions, regarding what action can be taken, were posed.

Douglas Fouts agreed that it is a difficult situation as Kevin Little cannot be told how to run his own shop or to hire more personnel. At this point, it is out of the realm of capability. What can be done is to track the statistics, which Danielle does, and ensure that the President and Provost are apprised of the situation. They must be kept informed that the policy would hurt PIs at NPS. Being persistent and factual is the proper course of action and ultimately might at least get Kevin Little to give a more realistic timeline for account establishment.

Danielle has thought about posting status updates online and looked at notification systems similar to the one used by ITAC. Unfortunately, it does not seem to fit the qualifications needed for this process. Anne Clunan asked what the Research Board can do to help. She proposed that a memo be written, with backup data to support, and then signed by the board. Danielle agreed that it was a good idea and noted that in the past the board has been able to make progress with such issues. Douglas Fouts asked if MIPR information could be posted online for all to see. Danielle said it wouldn’t be likely as some faculty members are concerned about the funding they receive, being known. A workaround would be to post the information but hide the financial information column.

*Contracting*

Contracting committee reported to President and was told to take as long as necessary to get the process right. There was talk of reinstating a task order for teaching. President Oliver understands that contracting and business practices are broken, but he is confident that the problems can be solved.

Anne Clunan met with President Oliver on the matter and he informed her that two committees have been tasked to address the various problems and report in 90 days.
Anyone with constructive ideas is welcome to share them with the committees. The problematic issues really came to light during a meeting, in January. The severity of the issues was made clearer by both Jim Wirtz and Bill Gates. Both had collected data from PIs and presented their findings to President Oliver. Bill Gates is leading the committee that will address issues related to financial accounting. Jim Wirtz is leading the committee that will address issues on Contracts.

Grants are still appropriate in place of contracts under certain circumstances. Danielle worked to obtain grant authority for FISC approximately 4 years ago. Other schools are more inclined to work with grants vs. contracts. One of the advantages associated with the grant process are pre-award costs. Grants must be funded from R&D. All must remember that a grant is assistance, and one cannot make or direct the grantee to do something. The granter proposes funding for the topic proposal.

Feedback on FBC/ Research Board Memo on Indirect Cost

Jim Newman began his update by saying that the comments he received, via email, from the Research Board were consistent with those discussed at the previous meeting. The memo was sent to the Faculty Council and the VP for F&A, President Oliver and Provost Ferrari. No direct feedback had been given at the time of this board meeting, but he felt confident that overall progress had been made.

In FY13 indirect will be based on labor hours, not labor cost as currently in FY12. The new budget template for FY13 will reflect this change. It is also important to note that there is no longer a “grandfather” policy as in the past, where the rate for the proposal was in effect for the life of the project. NPS argued this point but did not succeed. There are no legal grounds on which NPS can push back.

Role of Research Board

The primary role of the Research Board is to serve as an advisory council for the Dean of Research. Douglas Fouts mentioned that in his capacity as interim Dean, he will be using the board heavily. The importance of attending or sending a representative to the board meetings was reiterated.

ACTION ITEMS

Research Board Recap

In the spring quarter, each year, the Research Board examines the proposed recap items and follows guidelines for the voting. Douglas Fouts requested a list of past purchases and estimates of their returns. How much money was spent on the item? And how much funding did it bring in? How many students graduated due to the procurement of the piece? Were they able to use it to assist them in their thesis work? A document needs to be created that lists these facts as it will eventually be presented to President Oliver. The
The overarching purpose of the document will be to stress the continuing need for recap. The mezzanine thinks that when the mission budget is cut, the loss of funds can be made up from research dollars. This cannot be done with the loss of cutting edge equipment.

Bob Harney pointed out that perhaps the biggest example would be RIP funding. Phil Pace recommended that the document put emphasis on the fact that the board makes their decisions with a great deal of consideration and thought. Any journals or papers written as a result of recap funded equipment should be included in the data. Anne Clunan added that a broader and more strategic view should be taken, rather than just looking at the RB. She pointed out that it could be helpful to look at other mezzanine level indirect expenditures that should be reviewed. Douglas Fouts wanted it noted that he will inform the administration that a year cannot go by without recap.

**Input on Top 3 Research Projects Per Department**

A request was made for the Top 3 research projects from each department. Danielle added that she would send an example to all as she already has a template. Any project with some kind of impressive or high impact criteria should be considered. Classification does not matter, but anything FOUO or classified should be sent using the proper channels, such as JWIC or SIPRNET. A classified brief will be put together separately so that those projects can also be showcased.

**Input on Top 3 Items for Improvement in RSPO**

Danielle requested that board members poll their faculty and provide information on the top 3 items for improvement within the RSPO. This should include things that have not been done historically, but should be. It was suggested that there be a subcommittee to review.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20PM