

University Research Council

Minutes of March 18, 2019 Meeting

Members Present: Rob Rutenbar, SVCR and Chair, N. John Cooper, Deputy VC-Research; Michael Holland, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Research Strategy; Jennifer Woodward, VC-Research Operations; Velpandi Ayyavoo, Prof and Associate Dean-Graduate School of Public Health; Yvette Conley, Prof and Vice Chair-Research-School of Nursing; Marek Druzdzal, Prof-School of Computing and Information; Brian Galla, Assistant Prof-School of Education; Kent Harries, Prof-School of Engineering; Stephen Hirtle, School of Computing and Information; Holger Hooch, Amundson Prof and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research-School of Arts and Sciences; Neil Hukriede, Associate Prof and Vice Chair-School of Medicine; Frits Pil, Prof-Katz Graduate School of Business; Anne Robertson, Prof-Department of Mechanical Engineering; Jeremy Somers, Scientific Director-OORHS

Members Absent: Mark Anderson, Associate Prof-School of Arts and Sciences; Karen Arndt, Prof-School of Arts and Sciences; Debbie Brake, Associate Dean-School of Law; William Dunn, Prof-Graduate School of Public and International Affairs; Shaun Eack, School of Social Work; Raymond Engel, Associate Prof-School of Social Work; Julie Fiez, Prof & Chair of Psychology-School of Arts and Sciences; Robert Gibbs, Prof-School of Pharmacy; Alexandria Harris, Graduate and Professional Student Government Board/URC Graduate Student Representative; Sean Kelly, Prof-School of Education; Matthew Kropf, Assistant Prof-University of Pittsburgh at Bradford; William Layton, Prof-School of Arts and Science; Kacey Marra- Prof-School of Medicine; Elizabeth Monasterios, Prof-School of Arts and Sciences; Susan Sereika, Prof-School of Nursing; Steven Stern, Prof and Chair-University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown; Alexandre Vieira, Prof-School of Dental Medicine; Stephen Weber, Prof-School of Arts and Sciences; Peijun Zhang, School of Medicine.

1. Welcome and Announcements

Dr. Rutenbar welcomed the Council members and called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm

2. February 19, 2019 URC Meeting Minutes

The February meeting minutes had been circulated to Council and were approved *nem con.*

3. Foreign Influence Update

Dr. Rutenbar emphasized that this continues to be a matter of significant focus and interest at the federal level. The DOE continues to work on the regulatory specifics regarding foreign affiliations, such as the Chinese Talent Program. There have been efforts to create oversight and regulation, such as the proposed legislation from Congressman Jim Banks, which goes as far as propose the creation of a DOE task force to oversee foreign national graduate students who have access to sensitive research topics. The likelihood of this particular approach gaining traction is low. There are, however, many conflicting approaches at the federal level and it is unclear what regulations or legislation will ultimately emerge.

On the positive side of developments in this area, individuals from peer academic institutions have been recruited to committees being set up by national organizations, such as the Council on Government Relations (COGR), to work on language to propose for the regulatory oversight that funding and oversight agencies may put into place (e.g., language the NIH is likely to adopt to ensure disclosure of foreign affiliations of researchers whose work they fund that are of concern for IP management.) Pitt is represented in those conversations, and Dr. Rutenbar stated that this “thoughtful language”, created by fellow academics, is likely to lead to feasible processes, procedures, and regulations.

4. Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center—Director and Interim Leadership

Dr. Rutenbar reported on leadership changes at the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center (PSC). Dr. Nick Nystrom has stepped down as interim PSC director and has returned to a lead science role. Dr. Alan George, department chair for Electrical and Computer Engineering and director of the NSF Center for Space, High-performance and Resilient Computing, has been named the new interim director and is now responsible for the day-to-day operations of the PSC. Dr. Rutenbar reported that the search for a director is hopefully headed towards a conclusion, and that he is satisfied with the slate of candidates.

5. Changes at Office of Economic Partnerships

Dr. Rutenbar reported that Rebecca Bagley has her position leading the Office of Economic Partnerships and the University. Cynthia Sweet, associate vice chancellor for economic partnerships, will lead the office while decisions are made regarding OEP leadership. Before coming to Pitt, Cynthia worked at WVU as the founding director of their Corporate Relations Office and has extensive experience in the field.

6. Materials Research Science and Engineering Center Proposal

Dr. Mike Holland reported on the MRSEC proposal. MRSECs consist of two or three Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRGs) coordinated by the PI on the grant and a leadership team. An internal call for IRG proposals was sent earlier this year. The office of the SVCR convened a steering group to select and shape strong proposals in the broad area of materials interfaces. Five IRG proposals were received, and each group was invited to supplement their concept document with an oral presentation. The committee then down selected to three IRG teams:

- *Science and Engineering of Biological Interfaces* led by Dr. Prashant Kumta
- *Materials for Quantum Computing* led by Dr. Michael Hatridge
- *Mapping and Controlling Atomic and Molecular Interfaces of Next Generation Hybrid Materials* led by Dr. Nathaniel Rosi

Dr. David Waldeck will serve as PI for the entire proposal. Consultants from McAllister and Quinn have assisted the committee in creating an aggressive timeline for preparing proposals, soliciting external reviews, and pulling the proposals together.

Dr. John Cooper added that this integrated model has already helped incorporate critical researchers into the top IRG groups in ways that will strengthen the final proposal.

Dr. Rutenbar emphasized the competitive nature of the funding landscape for proposals of this type, and indicated that he is interested in applying best practice for large proposals (starting at \$20 million and up but targeting the \$50 to \$100 million range) in other areas.

7. Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.