

University Research Council
Minutes of January 19, 2021 Meeting

Members Present: *N. John Cooper, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research; Mark Lynn Anderson, Department of English; Karen Arndt, Department of Biological Sciences; Velpandi Ayyavoo, Graduate School of Public Health; Ipsita Banarjee, School of Engineering; Dominic Bordelon, University Library System; Ryan Champagne, Assistant Director for Research Development, Office of Sponsored Programs; Yvette Conley, School of Nursing; Mary Crossley, School of Law; Julie Fiez, Department of Psychology; Brian Galla, School of Education; Robert B. Gibbs, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences; Shelome Gooden, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research in the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Related Fields; Kent Harries, School of Engineering; Michael Holland, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Research Strategy; Heng Huang, School of Engineering; Sean Kelly, School of Education; William Layton, Department of Mathematics; Jeremy Levy, Department of Physics & Astronomy; Yu-Ru Lin, School of Computing and Information; Diane Litman, School of Computing and Information; Elizabeth Monasterios, Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures; Erica Owen, Department of Political Science; Frits Pil, Katz Graduate School of Business; Anne Robertson, School of Engineering; Rachel Robertson, School of Education; Margaret Rosenzweig, School of Nursing; Shilpa Sant, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences; Ravi Shankar, School of Engineering; Jeremy Somers, Office of Research, Health Sciences; Steven Stern, University of Pittsburgh Johnstown; Alexandre Vieira, School of Dental Medicine; Christian Wildberg, Department of Classics; Jennifer Woodward, Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs & Research Operations*

Members Absent: *Rob Rutenbar, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research; Debbie Brake, School of Law; William Dunn, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs; Shaun Eack, School of Social Work; Ray Engel, School of Social Work; Alexandria Harris, Graduate and Professional Student Government Board; Holger Hooek, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, School of Arts and Sciences; Neil Hukriede, Department of Developmental Biology; Matthew Kropf, University of Pittsburgh Bradford; Kacey Marra, School of Medicine; Nadine McQuarrie, Department of Geology & Environmental Science*

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. John Cooper welcomed the Council members and called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

2. Dec. 2020 URC Meeting Minutes

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

3. Updates

Dr. Cooper noted that the University continues to be in the Elevated Risk Posture.

4. Vaccination Update

Dr. Cooper explained that the current topic of discussion has now moved to when certain groups are going to receive the COVID vaccine. UPMC was established as a vaccine provider to vaccinate healthcare workers in the initial phase and he noted that this has been going well so far, with many recipients already on their second round of shots. Pitt is now working to be approved as a vaccine provider. Discussions are underway to include research workers who deal with patients in the next group to be vaccinated. Upper class medical students on clinical rotations are in process of being vaccinated now.

Dr. Mike Holland noted that there are some supply chain and distribution issues, which they expect will slow down the vaccination process some. He explained that the University makes suggestions of lists of people that should get the vaccine to UPMC and the Commonwealth and they determine who/when the vaccine is distributed to these people.

5. Overview of Prestigious Awards Bootcamp for Associate Deans

Dr. Cooper explained that Pitt has not done as good of a job as it should regarding going after prestigious awards. Dr. Holland stated that focusing more attention on nominating Pitt faculty for appropriate awards is a priority for the SVCR. To help in this effort, we will be doing a series of 30-min sessions with the Associate Deans for Research throughout February and March to get them to think about this and provide coaching. These sessions will look at a variety of fields and they will look at award ladders that would work for their specific schools/fields. They will then go into writing tips. The goal is to make sure things are in place so that we can get into a regular cadence of people being ready for nomination season.

Dr. Cooper noted that the timeline tool created by Ryan Champagne in the Office of Sponsored Programs can be used to find available awards, allowing them to be narrowed down by type, restrictions, etc. <https://www.osp.pitt.edu/limited-submissions-process>

6. Process to Update Area Activity Plans

Dr. Holland explained that the Chancellor has asked senior leadership to make sure the University is ready should we need to move to High Risk Posture. He noted that a review of the activity area plans from academic units, most of which were developed over the summer, has shown that most are in good shape but some need to be made a little clearer, especially with regards to human subject research. Very few will have any changes and most changes will be minor.

It was noted that there has not been any evidence that COVID transmission has occurred in any lab/research space.

7. Any other business

After the question was asked, Dr. Cooper confirmed that Pitt will be abiding by PA guidelines for vaccine distribution and that the University is working to define what the different category types mean in the university community.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:39 pm.