

University Research Council
Minutes of September 14, 2021 Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Rob Rutenbar welcomed the Council members and called the meeting to order at 11:34 am.

2. Rob Cunningham Introduction

Rob Rutenbar introduced Rob Cunningham as new VC for Research Infrastructure. Rob C gave general details about his background. He noted he is here to help and asked that anyone feel free to reach out to him if there's anything he can assist with.

3. Pitt Momentum Funds

URC is hub for finding reviewers across all of Pitt for opportunities for awards funding, fellowships, etc. Mike Holland explained that this is the kickoff for the 2021-22 PMF cycle. Some changes this year, including requiring letter of intent –gives opportunity to guide PIs into categories in which they'd be more likely to succeed. Will let coordinators read through letters and will transfer proposals to other tracks (w/ PI approval) that are better-suited.

Seeding awards have been raised from \$16k to \$25k, have removed \$2k undergrad supplement. Added microgrant option (<\$5k) to finish research project, rather than initiate.

Noted that there is reviewer conflict only if reviewer is direct collaborator.

PMF Teaming and Scaling emphasizes intent to pursue follow-on funding. Pitt Seed is programmatic support and has slightly different time frame.

This year a separate pot of \$ has been set aside for projects that investigate Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Goal is to involve social sciences in issues of public health, looking at other factors besides biology, etc.

Mike Holland shared the schedule/timeline for this year's cycle. Noted there have been 2 info sessions already. Now looking for volunteers to coordinate various tracks. Applications are due 10/11, so nothing for coordinators to do until then. Need min. 2 coordinators per track. Coordinators will help ID reviewers for all proposals in track. For seeding awards, make recommendations to fund or not to fund. For teaming track, will recommend short list of applicants to come in and make a pitch (5min pitch and 5min Q&A). For scaling awards, coordinators will coordinate reviews, make down selection for pitches, which go directly to Rob & Ann (provost). Teaming and scaling selections for pitches made in Nov, pitches in Jan, coordinators selections in Feb.

Shared numbers of applications received for this year's cycle. 12 scaling, 15 teaming, 53 seeding; 14 dealing w/ SDOH out of 77 total.

Will need 2 coordinators for scaling, 2 for teaming, 2 for each of the 4 seeding tracks.

Jeanine Buch for teaming or scaling

MLA and Eliz M for humanities seeding, MLA chair

Chris Widbberg for seeding arts and hum

Frits Pil for teaming again

Alex Vierrea for teaming again

Stina Mair for health life sci

Sean Kelly for soc sci (if that's what he did last time)

Rob Cunningham can help but not lead

Shilpa Sant can do health/life sci if needed

Jeremy Levy noted it would be useful to have advanced notice about upcoming opportunities, since submission timelines are often very short. Mike Holland noted that delay is often due to finding reviewers. Mike Holland noted that we will circulate list of awards so people can id what they may be able to help with ahead of time.

4. Limited Submission Process

Mike Holland explained that Ryan Champagne puts out weekly newsletters identifying various funding opportunities, which does mention limited submissions (lim subs), but also putting together one that does just lim subs every 3 weeks. Also disseminate opportunities through twitter, targeted messaging and ADR meetings. Noted weekly newsletters are mostly going to deans and chairs right now, but we are working on list to send to others.

For competition space application, must align with funder requirements – will pull language directly from sponsor's selection criteria. No guarantees of slot in following year, even if advised to revise and resubmit. Should note this when reapplying but must resubmit regardless.

Before going to reviewers there is eligibility review. Scoring metrics are made of 3 baseline metrics (creativity, scholarly impact, qualifications and prior accomplishments) and sponsor-specific criteria. Want internal reviewers to be using language that aligns with sponsor's criteria.

Scoring rubric is anchored in specific language (outstanding, strong, neutral, weak, deficient). Where Pitt can submit one app, we will ask for ranked list from reviewers.

Review committees will be made through requests to URC and ADRs for recommendations. Will ask prior awardees to participate in review and down selection. Always includes OSVCR staff and OORHS staff when appropriate. Strong preference for panel discussion when possible.

Applicants will receive feedback:

Selected:

- Avg score
- Reviewer feedback
- Coaching or intake mtgs
- P& AE or M&Q support
- Pre-submission review

Not selected

- Avg score (not share rankings)
- Reviewer feedback (strength, weaknesses, advice for improvement)
- Meeting if requested

Will keep summary information in spreadsheet (applicants, selectees, project titles, etc.)
Archive letters of support. Limited retention in OSVCR shared files of other materials that come in.

5. Other Business

Dr. Holland stated that Pitt has been invited to submit candidates for the Packard Fellowships for Science & Engineering and that 3-4 people would be need to read application packages to help narrow down the selection of 2 nominees from 13 applicants. He asked that anyone who would like to volunteer to do this should email him and Ryan Champagne.

He followed up by noting that there are several more upcoming limited submission awards that they will be looking for help to review, including Sloan Research Fellowships, which are important early-career awards that make someone more likely to be in the running for several later-career awards.

After a question was asked regarding the status of the NIH Instrument Grant Program, Ryan Champagne explained that the program was just announced the previous week and has begun to field applicants. He noted that the internal deadline has been set for April

15, with the NIH deadline being June 1. He stated that anyone with questions about this can reach out to him.

After a question was raised regarding virtual conference platforms, it was noted that Acelevents virtual events platform is supported by Pitt IT and has help available through the helpdesk.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:49 pm.