

Meeting Date: April 14, 2009 **Meeting Venue:** Room 286, Holmstedt Hall
Meeting Time: 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Members Present: S. Arvin (Secretary), L. Cutter, R. Fitch, C. Klarner (Chair), M. Miller, T. Nesser, D. Polizzi
Absent: A. Chandrasekaran, N. Nichols-Pethick
Executive Liaison: J. Fine
Ex-Officio: D. Underwood (absent)

The URC minutes of February 17, 2009 were approved. (TN/CK 7-0-0)

Miller suggested that the grant proposal be submitted to reviewers as a separate electronic document than the curriculum vita (CV) and appendices. Then reviewers could reference both documents simultaneously.

Members discussed imposing a page limit to the CV to force the principal investigator (PI) to select his most relevant publications. Members passed the following motion to limit the length of the CV to two pages.

Motion 1: In the instructions of “What to Submit” in the information and application guidelines document, under “VII. Resume of Principal Investigator” the number “10” shall be replaced with the number “2.” (Approved 7-0-0)

Members discussed instructing the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to not automatically send URC members hard copies of grant applications. Miller stated that it would be convenient if comments could be annotated into the PDF.

Motion 2: All URC members will continue to receive electronic PDFs of proposals, but will only receive hardcopies if the URC member requested. (Approved 7-0-0)

Members discussed the merits and challenges of anonymous review of grant proposals. It was suggested that the review would be less vulnerable to conscious or unconscious bias. Arvin commented that bias has been demonstrated to occur in review of research article publication but that true anonymity is very difficult to achieve because reviewers can often guess the identity of the author or PI from the subject matter. Changes to review procedure would not need to be approved by Faculty Senate because the URC guidelines specify the evaluation criteria, but not the process. Members suggested that the CV be submitted as a separate document from the proposal and, using the honor system, members review the proposal before reviewing the CV.

Such a change in procedure would necessitate a change to the scoring sheet. All items of the scoring sheet pertaining to evaluation of the grant application would be moved to the top. A horizontal divide would be placed into the score sheet, labeled “Evaluation of CV” and would have the remaining categories placed under it.

Motion 3: Perform a pilot project in Fall 2009 in which the CV is submitted separately from the proposal and the rubric is incorporated. Applications will be submitted in two parts: 1) the application itself and 2) the PI's CV. The first part will be totally anonymous, with no references to the PI's name. Evaluators will first fill out the part of the scoring sheet that pertains to the application itself. Second, evaluators will then look at the CV associated with the application.
(Approved 6-1-0)

Discussion ensued regarding whether special score sheets should be created to give to applicants for feedback. Feedback is beneficial to improve and refine proposals but score sheets can sometimes be ambiguous. Different criteria may not be evaluated with equal weight even if receiving equivalent scores. If criteria is too specific, scoring becomes very complicated. Three alternatives were specified during the meeting: a) do nothing at all to the scoring sheets, b) average the scores on the URC member's evaluation sheets and present these to applicants as feedback, or c) create a new scoring sheet for feedback in addition to the evaluation sheet that would be presented to grant applicants. Klarner stated his intention to consult the Office of Sponsored Programs. Have applicants in the past been satisfied with the feedback they have been given? Klarner would then send an e-mail to URC members for a vote.

Members discussed how to reduce confusion about what types of grants are acceptable to be submitted to the URC. This was discussed but no decision was made.

Klarner reported to URC that he went to the Faculty Senate Executive Council to present the URC's recommendations about Senate Charge #5 "*Make recommendations regarding the domain of responsibility held by URC,*" and second, changes to the application materials on who is eligible to submit applications. The consensus of the Executive Council seemed to be that they did not have to take formal action on the two items that were reported.

Klarner stated he would write a report for the Faculty Senate about the URC's activities and that this would be circulated via e-mail to the URC members for approval as written.
(Agreed 7-0-0)

Members discussed operation for the coming year. Klarner recommended continuing to have members submit only one final score and use z-scoring of final scores. If z-scoring isn't done (especially when URC members have to abstain from scoring because a grant is from their department), it can distort the scores badly. Members recommended that OSP investigate moving to electronic submission of proposals. Klarner was instructed to ask OSP about the timeline for destruction of documents regarding the evaluation process for URC grants by members. An additional change to the score sheet (discussed in prior meetings) is to add a place at the end of the score sheet for the URC member's overall rating of the grant.

Motion 4: Add a place on the application for the chair's signature for URC applications. This would not be for the chair's approval, but merely to indicate that the Department chair had looked at the proposal. (7-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM