Meeting Date: April 15-28, 2009   **Meeting Venue:** E-mail Communications
Meeting Time: NA
Members Present: S. Arvin (Secretary), A. Chandrasekaran, L. Cutter, R. Fitch, C. Klarner (Chair), M. Miller, T. Nesser, N. Nichols-Pethick, D. Polizzi
Absent:
Executive Liaison: J. Fine
Ex-Officio: D. Underwood

On April 19, Klarner had met with Underwood and the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to discuss the gather more information about the proposed and accepted changes of the URC Meeting of April 14. URC members were informed electronically of OSP comments and asked for feedback. A summary of the communications and electronic voting results follow.

- OSP saw no significant challenges to implementing the change to set a page limit of two pages for the curriculum vita (CV) of the principal investigator (PI).

- OSP saw no significant challenges to continuing to send PDFs to all URC members, but would only send hardcopies if the URC member requested.

- The URC approved 6-1-0 that a "pilot project" be adopted for one semester (Fall of 2009). 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.

  Although not discussed by the URC, executing this change would obviously require a change to the application instructions so that applicants would remove all personal identification from the application materials that would be submitted in the first round. This is a slight extension of the move toward anonymity. Underwood will consult with OSP staff about possible challenges caused by this change. Underwood recommended that the two types of documents be sent out in two waves, about a week apart. The URC would determine what dates the CVs would be sent at the meeting before the grants were distributed. This would further promote anonymous evaluations of the applications. If CVs are not sent separately, it would not be worth the extra time for OSP staff to split the submissions into two documents because it would be very easy for URC evaluators to make the PDF document into two separate documents themselves.

  URC VOTE #1: That in the pilot project, the two sets of documents referred to above (i.e., the application with all personal references removed, and secondly the CV) be sent out in two waves, the latter date specified by the URC.
  Vote #1 passed 8-0-0 (one member didn't vote)

On April 14, URC approved the "demonstration project" of moving toward anonymity for Fall 2009. Klarner noted that URC neglected to note in the meeting the need to alter the instructions to grant applicants. Because this obviously has to be done to implement the change elected during the April 14th meeting, the Chair determined not to hold another vote to have it done. OSP will have the instructions to grant applicants changed accordingly.

- Three feedback alternatives to grant applicants were specified during the April 14 meeting:
  a) do nothing at all to change how feedback is given to applicants,
  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.

  OSP could foresee no problems with whatever the URC decided. OSP advised that there only be three or four brief statements. Underwood observed that choices (b) and (c) may require more work for evaluators. She added that applicants could be given feedback verbally.

  URC VOTE #2: That some form of scores be given back to grant applicants as feedback.
  Vote #2 failed 3-5-0 (one member didn't vote)

- URC VOTE #3: The score sheet used by the URC should be provided in the application instructions.
  Vote #3 passed 7-1-0 (one member didn't vote)

  (Clarification: This has no connection to whether the average scores of the URC would be shared with grant applicants.)

- On April 14, URC passed Motion 4.

  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)

  Underwood queried the reasoning behind this motion. She was concerned that this change would create additional paperwork. Underwood communicated that chairs are alerted when a grant is awarded, but are not alerted when a grant is denied. Underwood said it would also be possible for the URC to vote on this in the Fall in time for the grants to have this requirement. However, this may cause confusion if it is done at the last minute. Klarner requested comments and feedback from URC members.

- Underwood was informed that URC members recommended that OSP investigate moving to electronic submission of proposals.

- On April 14, Klarner was instructed to ask OSP about whether URC members were required to keep records regarding the evaluation process for URC grants. Underwood said that they could be disposed of at the end of the process and that there was no requirement for saving this material.

- Underwood was informed that the URC discussed adding an additional change to the score sheet (discussed in prior meetings) to add a place at the end of the score sheet for the URC member's overall rating of the grant. Underwood said this would be done.