

MINUTES

Research Strategic Advisory Council

Thursday, May 19, 2016

3:00pm – 4:00pm

302 AAB

Members Present: Andrea Giuffrida, Robert Clark, Christopher Green, Alexander Pertsemidid, Charles France, Byron Hepburn, Mike Beckstead, Reto Asmis, Jennifer Potter, Kyumin Whang and Erzsebet Kokovay

Guest: Valerie Hutchison and Robin Leach

Members Absent: Thomas Oates, Carrie Jo Braden, Rajeshwar Tekmal, Ian Thompson, and Maureen Simmonds

Minutes from 2/9/16 approved by Council

Biorepository at the CTRC update

Per recent RSAC discussions, Dr. Thompson had reported that the CTRC had formed a working group to discuss the creation of a cancer-related biorepository at the HSC. Dr. Giuffrida underlined the need to create a larger institutional biorepository core that should go beyond cancer. Dr. Leach, on Dr. Thompson's behalf, gave an update on the status of the CTRC biorepository. For background, Dr. Leach noted she attended a meeting with Dr. Patricia Hurn (UT System, Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovations) earlier this year. At this meeting it was evident that UT Southwestern, MD Anderson and UT Houston all have invested in biorepositories and there was discussion that every UT institution should have a common biobanking structure (a "freezer bank"), so that all UT institutions could share their specimens. However, to date, no UT System funds have been provided for this scope. Dr. Leach also reported that the Texas Regional CTSA Consortium (TRCC) submitted an application to the NIH proposing a collaboration among the CTSA's to obtain biological specimens on rare diseases; however the proposal was not well reviewed. At the last TRCC meeting, the CTSA representatives further discussed to prospectively collect more common samples and UT System created a White Paper for a new initiative to pay for freezer monitoring systems and sample bar coding systems; however no funds for freezers or space renovations were included in the White Paper. Dr. Leach also participated in a few conference calls to gain information on inventory systems, such as iLab and Velos, as well as the current inventory system at MD Anderson, which has been recently expanded and is considered by UT System as a possible model to emulate. Dr. Leach also reported that Dr. Thompson had brought in two outside pathologists to evaluate the HSC's current resources in biobanking and provide recommendations on how to expand our infrastructure. The pathologists recommended to involve the Department of Pathology in gathering tissue samples, and that the collection of other biological samples, such as blood, urine, etc., could be done independently from Pathology. Dr. Leach noted that, according to the IRB, there is a large number of biorepositories in the institution, and approximately 12 of them are cancer-related. Dr. Leach assessed the quality of the biospecimens in pathology that have been sponsored by the CTRC since 1992, but unfortunately the vast majority of the specimens tested had poor quality RNA. Dr. Leach mentioned that infrastructure for a state of the art biobank is needed and there are new efforts to identify grant opportunities for biobanking. A CPRIT grant was submitted with Texas Tech, but it was not funded, and Dr. Leach is working in collaboration with the University of Alabama on a U01 due in July to bank biological samples from colon and liver cancers. Dr. Leach commented she had previously discussed with Dr. Michael Wilson and Dr. Giuffrida the need to identify space for a freezer bank at the HSC with a processing lab. Dr. Giuffrida committed that he would schedule a meeting with Leigh Ann Kensky to discuss space availability and identify available resources, if space renovations are needed.

Opportunities to improve grant announcement update

Per discussion at the last meeting, Dr. Giuffrida asked Chris Green to comment on the possibility of improving grant announcements. Chris Green reported that the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is working on updates on their funding opportunities website. Valerie Hutchison (Pre-award Manager, OSP) gave a preview of the website updates in progress. The quick links will be reduced and funding opportunities that are currently in the quick links section will be moved to the main area. Under Current Funding Opportunities a searchable link (excel spreadsheet) will be added allowing for the information to be updated in a more timely manner. This will also allow standard deadlines for the most popular opportunities to be easily viewed. Additional searchable Funding Databases will be included such as SPIN and Genius, Sci-Val, TX DSHS and Grants.gov. OSP focuses on the SPIN database (through InfoEd Global) that is a subscription based service that OSP pays for. OSP can assist PI's in building a profile in SPIN, entering their interests and key words so that SPIN can generate individualized automatic email notifications of new opportunities via email. Dr. France asked if there is a centralized place on campus to view various internal pilot funds, bridge funds and specialized opportunities being offered. Dr. Potter noted that she is building a list of limited submissions for the HSC and looking into a centralized mechanism to notify PIs of upcoming deadlines for all intramural funding opportunities. Dr. Potter also recommended standard language when opportunities are sent out via email across the HSC, such as adding in the subject line "FUNDING OPPORTUNITY" (uppercase). *Dr. Giuffrida asked Dr. Potter to present an update of her project at the next RSAC meeting.*

Animal Space Allocation

Dr. Giuffrida discussed that there is not an institutional policy on how space in the 6 HSC animal facilities is assigned and that this is currently handled by Dr. Sandy Hacker (Director, Lab Animal Resources). In some of the facilities, such as the STRF building, space allocation is difficult due to lack of available procedure rooms and housing space. Dr. Giuffrida proposed to create a standing committee that would be responsible for animal space allocation.

- 1) The Committee will include:
 - a) Standing Members from the VPR office (Dr. Mark Nijland, Dr. Sandy Hacker and Rudy Trevino)
 - b) Ad hoc Members (Facility administrators/supervisors; GCCRI/Barshop directors, Chairs, CPI/chair/member, etc).
- 2) The Committee will be responsible for new space allocations, solve inter-departmental disputes, identify new needs, and develop policy for space allocation.
- 3) The VPR Office will maintain the right to inspect space, enforce rules, and cover costs for renovations.

Per AAALAC regulations, it is up to the VPR Office to maintain the right to inspect the DLAR facility and guarantee proper conditions of animal space areas. The RSAC committee agreed to proceed. *Dr. Giuffrida will proceed in developing an animal space allocation committee.*

Due to time, the other agenda items will be discussed at the next RSAC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm