



Meeting Minutes
15 September 2015

Committee members present:

Brian Vander Naald (chair), Brian Buma, Chris Donar, Kelly Jensen, Claire Ligsay, Chip McMillan, Karen Schmitt and Emily Wall

Ad-hoc member(s):

Carolyn Bergstrom (IACUC representative for UAS)

Committee members absent:

Roxy Felkl, Jan Straley

Guests:

None

Members emeritus:

Sanjay Pyare, David Tallmon

Discussion Items

New Business

Meeting minutes...the committee approved the April meeting minutes with the condition that a note be added regarding KTN and SIT inability to attend due to technical difficulties in Juneau. Such a note has been added to the April minutes.

Archaeology...Dan Monteith is writing a Field School Protocols document. When complete, this will be appended to the Field Safety Guidelines document drafted by Brian Buma. Both documents will then be advanced by Karen to Statewide for feedback.

URECA – upcoming changes and a year or two of transition...Karen reports that historically URECA funds have been combined with Honors. Honors will do a program review this year and URECA will be asked to do theirs next year. At that time, the program review committee may wish to consider incorporating into URECA these items: 1. student learning outcomes and 2. alignment with 4 year academic programs. See Continuing Business for further discussion related to this topic.

Research Activity reporting...Karen presented to the group the document SPBAC is using titled *UAS Core Themes, Objectives & Performance Measures*. These measures were renewed in the Fall and are going to Board of Regents (BoR) ??? for approval. Karen asked if the group would like to revise these measures prior to delivery to BoR. Brian Buma inquired about the procedure for making changes. Karen suggested that she could assist, but that the committee should provide feedback to Faculty Senate. Chip asked about the nature and mission of SPBAC; Karen provided a detailed response about its creation and work over the last several



months. Each of the department representatives agreed to address the matter in their department meeting and report back with requested changes to the measurements.

ORCA Manager recruitment... Karen reported that the position is still open and that initial screening will begin September 21. This position will ultimately be responsible for issues of compliance, communications, etc., but to begin, we need to address outstanding fiscal matters in research and sponsored programs. From there, the Manager can move toward reporting metrics and items above.

Natural Sciences items... Brian Buma brought the following items from the NS Department.

1. Given that we are establishing and codifying field safety guidelines, the same should likely be done for lab safety. How can that be achieved? NAU is currently doing a nation-wide assessment of field safety guidelines; it may help us to review their findings.
2. Faculty have experienced difficulty in trying to manage travel during field season due to an inability in TEMS to process travel shortly before it occurs. When last minute travel is required due to field conditions, this results in an “unauthorized purchase” and angst between staff and faculty. Could we consider a “blanket TA” or some other option which would allow faculty to more easily book last minute travel which is to be paid from existing grant funds? Additionally, could faculty be provided with personal travel cards in order to book travel and cover unexpected field expenses provided that funds are available in the grant?

Karen indicated that the TEMS system is not ideal, but it is our system and we are required to work within it. Claire stated that travel cards might be a possibility, but said she will check and get back to the group.

Continuing Business

URECA (upcoming RFP) discussion...

URECA award monies are drawn from general funds. For this and a few other reasons (including the current budget contraction), we need to shift the URECA award cycle to a fiscal (not calendar) year. As this year is somewhat of a transition year for the program, it is an opportune time to make the shift. Its effect this year will be that students have only ~ 6 months to spend money and complete a project, but we are still going to provide the opportunity.

Previously, the committee has discussed the possibility of instituting a fee applicable to all students which would provide a basis for future URECA funding; the committee again briefly considered this question. It is likely that possibility would have to go through Student Government.

Brian Buma asked about how student learning outcomes would be assessed? i.e. Is the faculty mentor evaluating the student? Also, how does the funding connect to degree program positioning? Should the program outcomes and identity be confused by a URECA budget?

Also, included in this discussion...

Humanities items... Emily Wall brought the following items from the Humanities Department.

1. Humanities faculty would like greater transparency in communicating why projects are or aren't chosen as it seems that very few Humanities students are awarded in comparison to Natural Sciences. A concern was also expressed that Alaska Native students seem to be underrepresented in the number of projects awarded.
2. Humanities faculty would like greater consistency in applying the RFP rule that “funds cannot be used solely to present at a conference”.



Brian indicated that, anecdotally, few Alaska Native students have applied and in at least 2 of those cases, the student was not awarded because the faculty mentor did not provide a letter of support by the stated deadline. Kelly said, anecdotally, in recent history a high proportion of awardees were in Humanities.

Kelly asked if Emily could assist in re-writing a section of the RFP which Humanities faculty find to be precluding their students from applying. Emily agreed to help.

Establish next meeting date

The group decided by consensus that the next meeting shall be held in mid-October. Brian VN will send a Doodle Poll to establish a date and time.

Action items

- Departmental representatives to discuss with their faculty the Performance Measures document and suggest edits as appropriate (Brian VN, Brian B, Emily)
- Confirm allowable use of travel cards for faculty purchases and type of purchases allowed (Claire)
- Re-write the URECA RFP to be more inclusive of Humanities students prior to this year's announcement (Kelly and Emily)
- Get firm statistics about number of URECA awards and departmental percentages (Kelly)
- Survey poll for next meeting date (Brian VN)