

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
Research Policy and Advisory Committee

Minutes

October 1, 2020; 10:00 a.m.

Via Microsoft Teams

1. Call to order and approval of the agenda

Robin Mello called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Members Present:

Abigail Amisah-Arthur; Janis Eells, Marija Gajdardziska-Josifovska (ex officio), Mark Harris (ex officio), Tom Holbrook, Jennifer Jordan, Jay Kappellusch, Robin Mello (chair), Kate Mollen (ex officio), Doug Stafford, Alan Wiseman

Members Absent:

Kristin Roosevelt, Anne Widmayer

Guests:

Kathleen Koch, Kristian O'Connor, Michelle Schoenecker, Kari Whittenberger-Keith (Office of Research); Jennifer Herriges (University Safety & Assurances), Gwat-Yong Lie (Associate Dean, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare), Andrew Graettinger (Associate Dean for Research, College of Engineering and Applied Science), Daad Saffarini (Associate Dean for the Natural Sciences, College of Letters & Science)

The agenda was approved as distributed.

2. Automatic Consent

The minutes of the May 11, 2020 meeting were approved as distributed.

3. Reopening Research Spaces

Mark Harris, Vice Provost for Research, outlined the process for closing research spaces due to COVID-19, and then the ongoing reopening of those spaces.

In early March, campus began discussing contingency plans for a COVID outbreak in the region. By March 18 campus access was limited to "essential employees" as determined by a review coordinated through the Provost's Office. Planning then began for standards to use in determining a safe return to on campus spaces. Office of Research personnel worked in collaboration with University Safety & Assurances (US&A) to develop policies based on emerging national norms for determining room occupancy and building capacity limits, safety protocols, and a safety plan template, submission, and review process. At the building level, this needed to be coordinated with classroom spaces for fall. A similar policy and process was developed for field research.

By late August, norms were established and were frameworks refined to allow more nuanced reopening than just the initial 25% capacity, and tracking/monitoring systems were in place. This included research involving human subjects to allowing some of this work while minimizing risk. Employee training and attestation has replaced the Essential Employee request and review, and we can now make decisions on research spaces independent of instructional spaces.

The planning involved a very high time commitment over the past 6 months with a small number of staff. All involved appreciate the patience of UWM's researchers as we worked through the process. Updates are posted here.

Jennifer Herriges, Laboratory Safety Coordinator, University Safety & Assurances, answered questions from committee members and guests on

- Ventilation in classrooms and labs. UWM is at the recommended levels for COVID, 6-8 air exchanges/hr; US&A conducts periodic checks on vent hoods
- Ventilation in restrooms and stairwells. With little capacity for renovations at this time, wearing of masks and short contact times are the mitigating factors in these spaces. All restrooms should have signs posted listing room capacity.
- Buildings with classrooms and labs on the same floor. If someone who has been in shared space tests positive, remediation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Factors to consider are proximity and duration of contact.
- Researchers who also use teaching labs – All research safety plans need to include shared spaces. PIs are responsible for their students being informed of and following the safety plans.

Robin Mello encouraged repetition/reinforcement of the guidelines and also including information on whom to contact if problems are observed.

4. Framework for Invited Speakers on Community-Engaged Research

Robin Mello briefed the committee on guests who would be invited to future meetings to present examples of collaborative and community-engaged research and different modes of research that are taking place on campus. She also asked members for suggestions for guest speakers in these areas.

5. Updates from the Office of Research

Mark Harris, Vice Provost for Research, gave short updates on the following:

- Plan for Research Excellence – completion of this report was delayed by COVID; it was sent to the Provost a few days ago
- 2030 Implementation Team Research Subgroup – report is due at the end of December; more details will be provided at the next RPAC meeting

6. Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures

Kate Mollen, Interim Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, provided background on the document.

The current policy is old, uses outdated position titles, and has administrative processes imbedded. It is better to have processes separate, which have been removed to a proposed guidance document. UW Madison has also separated COI policy from procedures. Legal Affairs, the Provost and the university Conflict of Interest committee have reviewed the proposed changes.

The proposed policy will be placed in the November agenda for a vote of endorsement.

7. Suggestions for Future Agenda Topics

None were offered.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Kathleen Koch