

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
Research Policy and Advisory Committee

Minutes

March 22, 2023 meeting

Via Microsoft Teams

1. Call to order and approval of the agenda

The chair was unable to attend; Mark Harris called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Members Present:

Jennifer Haas, Ann Hanlon, Mark Harris (ex officio), Jennifer Kibicho, Joseph Mougel, Sara Pashak, Michael Pauers, Sam Westcott (ex officio)

Members Absent:

Paul Brodwin, Madhusudan Dey, David DiValerio, Janis Eells, Jennifer Herriges, and Jay Kapellusch

Guests:

Anne Kissack, Kathleen Koch, Cindy Marifke, Kris O'Connor, (Office of Research); Hanyong Park (ITPC liaison); Melody Harries (University Safety and Assurances)

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 22, 2023, meeting were approved as distributed.

3. Update on University Safety & Assurances Compliance Areas from Melody Harries

Within US&A, Melody Harries oversees research compliance (animal care, biological safety, human subjects' protection (IRB) and radiation safety) and Zach Steuerwald oversees environmental health, safety, and risk management.

The most stable area is radiation safety. The number of users of radiation at UWM has stayed stable over time. There is a 0.5 FTE radiation safety officer (Kim). Currently there are 17 people approved on campus to use 70 unique isotopes. Of those 17 people, there are seven to nine active labs at any given time and any lab that is active with radioactive work gets a monthly inspection from the radiation safety officer. There are 12 to 13 PIs at any given time using X-ray devices. Those labs are inspected twice a year.

One of the strengths of the radiation safety program is the extremely detail-oriented safety officer. Another strength is the scintillation counter which is used in lab inspections. It detects if there is any radioactive contamination in the labs.

The main challenge to the radiation safety program is that Kim doesn't have many people available to her in a similar position. Most resources are for people who work in industry and not an academic institution.

The biological safety program has a 1.0 FTE safety officer (Jill). She oversees the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). There are currently 82 active protocols. Her turnaround time for office review is typically one day. Jill also does the lab inspections. The first time that UWM had

a full-time safety officer was in 2017. That person developed the program and the current biological safety officer has built upon that foundation. The program recently transitioned to an electronic protocol management system, which has been very helpful in tracking regulatory reviews.

Staffing is the main challenge for the biological safety program. There was especially low staffing between July 2020 and November 2021 which affected lab inspections. They are hiring a new industrial hygienist position so somebody will have microbiological or biosafety experience and knowledge. Another challenge is the IBC chair transitions. They had two chairs in a row who served for about a year and then were asked by their department to assume department chair duties.

In the animal care program, there is a full-time veterinarian, an animal care manager, a technician, and student hourly workers. These staff provide daily care for the laboratory mice and rats that live in the facilities on campus, run and maintain the animal care facilities in Lapham, Garland and Pearce, oversee monitoring and compliance activities for fish and other vertebrates, and offer hands-on training for anyone who is interacting with animals.

There are currently 69 active animal care protocols. The turnaround time for office review is one to three business days. This has been stable through the years. A major undertaking that the animal care programs go through every three years is accreditation and inspection. This past June the program passed with no concerns.

The challenges for the animal care program are aging facilities and equipment and student worker retention. The Garland and Pierce locations don't have cage washing facilities, so the cages must be transported to and from Lapham Hall to be cleaned. There's also no capability for higher risk research at biosafety level two.

The fourth area that Melody oversees is the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects' protection. There is one full-time person (Leah) that is the IRB administrator. Melody has been serving in two roles as the Compliance Director and the IRB manager.

There are 112 active protocols. There were 773 reviews for fiscal years 2020 through 2022. The turnaround time is about one month and that has been increasing over time. There have been some staffing losses over the past year and a half and those have resulted in longer turnaround times. For comparison, an institution the size of UWM would typically have four staff reviewing about 700 protocols. We have about 800 reviews and 1.5 staff.

There has also been an increase in the number of studies requiring full board view, which plays into the increased workload.

It would be beneficial to have a newer animal care facility in the same part of the campus (for example, the Southwest Quad). This would also reduce the amount of equipment (autoclaves, etc.) that is needed.

4. Updates from the Office of Research

Mark Harris stated that there has been growing interest in potential collaborations with other universities like Madison on some large or federal projects. There will be updates in the future.

The Office of Research also has a goal of adding another research development position sometime over the summer to help with building collaborations and coordination of large proposals.

Kris O'Connor gave an update on the policies that were approved last month. They will be forwarded to the Senate. The Open Research Policy will be voted upon, and the Export Control and Compensation Compliance Policies will be put on automatic consent.

Kris and Jeff Nytes may bring a draft of a policy on training for NSF/NIH Responsible Conduct of Research requirements to the next meeting.

Sam Westcott is continuing to work on the research integrity training that is going to launch in the fall for faculty.

5. General Good and Welfare

None

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 1:43 p.m.