

Boston College University Research Council

Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Waul House

Members Present:

Kevin Bedell, Vice Provost for Research
Arnold Shore, Associate Vice Provost for Research
Joanne Scibilia, Office for Sponsored Programs
Steve Erickson, Research Integrity and Compliance; Research Protections
Catherine Ives, Office of Technology Transfer and Licensing
Hiram Brownell, Psychology
Patricia Doherty, Institute for Scientific Research
Dean Hashimoto, Law School
Charlie Hoffman, Biology
Amy Hutton, Accounting
Lucas Lindsay, Graduate student, Physics
Thanh van Tran, Graduate School of Social Work
Christopher Wilson, English
Barbara Wolfe, Connell School of Nursing

Absent:

Tim Kelly
Kris Kempa
Devin Pendas

Arnie opened the meeting by providing an overview of the agenda. Arnie announced that Steve Erickson will serve as Interim Director of the Office of Human Protections.

1. Conflict of Interest (COI) and Conflict of Commitment (COC)

Arnie continued by providing opening comments on the Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment. Arnie explained the two-track approach to COI and COC. One being University based under the oversight of Pat DeLeeuw and the other related to sponsored programs under the oversight of OSP.

Steve Erickson explained that the COI policy was created in response to the federal regulations cited in NIH and NSF regulations and is related to financial matters, regarding personal external affiliations. At the present time, BC does not have any formal policy or guidance on COC aside from a brief mention in the current disclosure form. The *Faculty Handbook* mentions that faculty members are allowed one day per week for external activities.

Steve stated that the Federal regulations are becoming stricter and greater oversight of COI is required. For example, the federal government may remove the \$10,000 threshold for reporting COI and require recipients of federal funds to report all COI's.

Also, Steve noted that the COI Disclosure Form has been amended to include a section on COC.

Arnie mentioned that COC is separate from time that is reported on effort reports. COC must be managed so as to enable employees to fulfill their University responsibilities.

Steve emphasized that the COI form must be signed by all key personnel who have decision making authority on the project, not just the PI. Steve expressed the importance of obtaining the COI forms and possible exposure to audit findings for lack of documentation.

There was some discussion among Council members about the meaning on “non-teaching” activities and teaching responsibilities at BC and teaching at other institutions. Also, it was unclear to the Council members what makes up 100% of an employee’s time. There was also discussion of the COC of full-time, non-faculty researchers and how to handle consulting fees.

Steve asked for comments on the DRAFT policy on Conflict of Interest and Commitment Pertaining to Sponsored Projects.

2. Effort Reporting

Council members discussed the draft policy on Effort Reporting that Steve provided. Joanne explained that while BC has an acceptable procedure for reporting effort, at the present time there is no formal policy.

Council members offered some suggestions such as an on-line certification for the PI indicating that he/she has read the policy. This would provide an audit trail and show that the University has done due diligence in educating the PI and making him/her accountable. Council members suggested that the PI be required to respond to two statements on the effort report indicating that they understand the purpose of the effort report and that they understand the penalty for not completing it accurately.

Steve asked for comments on the DRAFT policy on Effort Reporting.

3. Status of Policy Formulation

Animal Care:

The current Animal Care Manual needs to be updated and revisions are in process and should be completed by the end of the summer.

Human Participants:

The policy on Use of Human Participants in Research needs to be rewritten. The process should be completed by the end of the summer.

Export Controls:

A policy, procedures and education are needed. The policy will abide by Federal regulations and will pertain to everyone, not just those working on sponsored projects. The policy will address “deemed imports” from restricted countries. It will involve

equipment, laptops, etc. and those working on the equipment will require a license to use it. If a license is needed, it could take up to 8-9 months to get one and this could delay the research. The lead federal agencies are Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of State and Dept. of Treasury.

Data Retention:

A policy exists, but not widely circulated. It was originally created to bring the University in compliance with the Shelby Amendment. Questions remain about who will pay for retaining the data and how long the data should be retained. The redrafting of the policy will focus on those issues.

Intellectual Property:

The IP policy is under review by the University General Council and the Office for Technology Transfer and Licensing.

4. Policy Implementation:

The BC Office of Environmental Health and Safety has implemented the use of ChemTracker to manage the chemical inventory on campus.

The Cost Sharing Policy is under final review by the University General Council. The Cost Sharing Business Process will be implemented in February 2009.

5. Other Matters:

The VPR office is working on a project to involve faculty, deans and department chairs in assigning roles and responsibilities for complying with research-related policies. The involvement of faculty and administrators will be key to the success of the project. Having defined roles and responsibilities will eliminate confusion and allow for greater compliance with policies. A matrix will be used as a reference tool.