

## **Bloomington Faculty Council Research Affairs Committee**

**March 28, 2025 10-11 am – via Zoom**

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Jillian Kinzie (Co-Chair), Pete Kollbaum (Co-Chair), Ashley Clark, Stephen Hiller, Seda Durguner, Ethan Fridmanski, Scott Michaels (Ex-officio),

Unable to attend: Timothy Mickelborough, Alexis Harbour, Brea Perry, David Rutkowski (on leave this semester); David Taylor and Wen Qi (Ex-officio), Student representative, Luke Saxton-Stivers (IUSG).

Refer to this site for RAC meeting schedule and 2024-25 Assignments:

<https://bfc.indiana.edu/committees/standing/rac/index.html>

February 21, 2025 Minutes approved.

Scott confirmed that the IUB research topics of interest raised at our February meeting are still ongoing. IU Research is responding to concerns about funded research work stoppages and uncertainty with federal funding. See all federal agency communications:

<https://research.iu.edu/news-events/federal-agency-communications/index.html>

Upon reviewing [ACA-A1](#) (see section; REGULATION OF RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS Research Ranks) for alignment with [ACA-A5](#) and discovering inconsistencies in posted policy compared to what the BFC voted on and approved, the RAC referred the matter to David Taylor to look into making administrative corrections to the posted policy.

Pete and Jillian met with IU Research Compliance, AVP Shelley Bizila, regarding the research incentive matter (see <https://policies.iu.edu/policies/fin-acc-640-contests-drawings-games-prizes/index.html#scope> and <https://policies.iu.edu/policies/fin-acc-590-gifts-employees-non-employees/index.html>) in hopes of identifying an improved solution to facilitate the use of incentives in research. Improvements would support incentive use, making financial policies and practices clearer to researchers and their fiscal officers to ease implementation burden and ensure protection of participants. The goal is to optimize the effective practice of research incentives. Shelley will take this matter up in her office and invited us to check back in a month.

A comprehensive review of IU Research and VP Russ Mumper is being conducted – “IU Research Administrative Review” (see [UA-15, Review Process for Administrative Offices](#)) and is expected to be complete by May, 2025. The intent of this review is to be improvement-oriented and ultimately to provide support and guidance to the unit and sub-units. Pete and Jillian serve on the review committee. IU Faculty and staff engaged in research were invited to participate in an anonymous survey (from: Institutional Survey Support [iusurvey@iu.edu](mailto:iusurvey@iu.edu), March 24). The survey sample included PI/Co-PIs, researchers known to work on animal studies, researchers identified through IRB, combined about 3K sampled. Several RAC committee members were interested in giving input but had not received invitations to the survey. Pete offered to follow up with the leaders of the review process to ask if the survey can be sent to RAC members.

The committee discussed updates on post-doc salary minimum. RAC had been working with BAC to explore ways to increase post-doc salary as a mechanism to enhance research at IU by

increasing our ability to attract and retain post-docs. Several different financial models were explored, with the most recent being setting the post-doc salary minimum equal to that of 12-month weighted equivalent graduate student stipend. There was general acceptance from RAC and BAC with this, however, when this model was presented to units (e.g. many units of COAS) there was significant concern that this change was not needed and would in fact hurt research productivity. Specifically, there was feeling that IU's post-doc salaries were often already competitive, so increasing them further would only decrease the number of postdoc positions and accordingly decrease research productivity. The recommendation is to not proceed with this suggestion. However, to be in alignment with university policy which requires BAC to annually review salary minima, it is suggested that BAC check with units, including the COAS in late December to see if they perceive their salaries as still competitive. This information can then be used by BAC to help recommend minima for the year.

RAC members discussed the value of post-doc salary minimums and the challenges owing to disciplinary differences. The suggestion is for RAC to send a memo to the Budgetary Affairs Committee with the information we have attained and this friendly suggestion. RAC can then mark this task as completed and include this in our end of year summary.

Last year RAC made progress on research transparency and "dark money" with a proposed guidance document for which feedback was attained from ORA, IUF, and ORC. After conversations with ORC this year and changes in mandatory reporting (e.g. all funding sources need to be reported through COI with associated management plans), we need to investigate where gaps are present, if any. Pete agreed to do another review of the comprehensive information compiled by Sally Letsinger and past year's RAC committee members. Provided there is nothing further, this task could then be marked as completed. If not, work would proceed accordingly.

Another matter carried forward from previous RAC committee work is the issue of research NTT and parental leave. Last year, Ben Kravitz and Sally Letsinger had proposed university support of research NTT leave to OVPFAA. There was some support for this from OVPFAA but less support from IU Research. As a result, this initiative got stalled. Pete checked with OVPFAA and learned they still support the concept but think timing to propose is not right with research funding uncertainties. The suggestion is for RAC to explore this topic next year to see if timing is better.

The committee then engaged in a short period of open discussion on the topic of the relationship between the new IUB Chancellor and research. While research and creative activity is broadly under the Chancellor, the specific scope may still be in negotiation.

As always, committee members are urged to consider: How can we help good research get done?

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Next meeting: April 18, 2025 10:00 am via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Jillian Kinzie