

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

**November 14, 2024, 3-4 pm – Zoom**

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Jillian Kinzie (Co-Chair), Pete Kollbaum (Co-Chair), David Rutkowski, Ashley Clark, Seda Durguner, Wen Qi (Ex-officio), Scott Michaels and Kaylie Hash (Ex-officios)

Unable to attend: Stephen Hiller, Ethan Friedmanski, Timothy Mickelborough, Alexis Harbour, Brea Perry, Student representative, Luke Saxton-Stivers (IUSG)

The meeting opened with a welcome from co-chairs Pete and Jillian.

October 4, 2024 Minutes approved.

Scott Michaels provided an update from IU Research Office. Scott is in the process of updating Administrative policy RP 11-002. At this point, the UFC RAC has seen it, Associate Deans for Research, and other administrative leaders have also reviewed. The need for an update on this policy arose following a question by Assistant VP for Accreditation who has been pulling together resources for reaffirmation, and had asked for information about the last time the Centers were reviewed. The updated policy establishes protocols for creating, concluding and sustaining Centers and specifies action regarding Center reviews. If schools enact reviews they are welcomed to use these reviews to comply with the policy. Deans will be contacted to affirm that reviews are conducted. The point is to ensure that there is a University wide reporting structure and protocol for establishing and maintaining a Center. Applications for Centers would come to Scott and he would then contact stakeholders to discuss and explore if the Center bumps up against other Centers at IU, among other issues.

Another update from Scott is about F100 and its impact on research/lab space. Scott is co-chairing a committee on lab renovations and many issues have arisen about the need for a more comprehensive process for allocating research space. With typical department hires, space is gauged and allocated as part of the hire at the department level. However, with F100 happening at the Provost level there is the potential for hiring someone who needs space but the department they are joining does not have it. To reduce the ad-hoc nature of space allocations, there is a need to establish guidelines for research space allocations. Scott expects BFC RAC to see something likely called the Research Space Allocation Guidelines for review soon. The Provost would like to have this in place by June 2025.

Research affairs has been tasked with exploring the retention of exceptional post-docs. Pete was on the Budgetary Affairs Committee that discussed that Post-docs were being paid less than NIH required and this was addressed in a memo in 2022 (attached for reference by BFC RAC) and provided to the budget office. We are returning to this matter given its importance following the graduate student stipend increase, implications of FLSA, and to address the established minimum by the government. Memo provided 2 years ago set salary minima to a benchmark. Budgetary Affairs suggested benchmarking to NIH salary minima, which would get us in compliance with NIH, and help the university plan for these increases.

What do RAC members think about the 2022 memo and are we still in agreement? RAC members discussed the rationale for graduated increase vs. immediate increase to get to fair rate. If FSLA is approved, then all will immediately need to be paid at a higher rate, if FSLA fails, then units could still pay at a lower rate than this memo proposes. We acknowledge the difficulties of covering salary increases with grant funds which are fixed so in the case of an increase it requires that the unit absorb the cost or for the raise to be spread out to lower the burden. The hope is that all positions will be raised to this minima as soon as possible. The committee questioned if all these classifications should be reflected in a Table, as this implies that they are paid or should be paid similarly. Rather, this memo is really just about minimum salary. The broad classification could be unhelpful. How do we ensure the focus is on minima vs. suggesting that the classifications are equivalent? One small way to convey the focus on achieving the minima could be to re-order columns in the Table with the first column being the minima instead of the category ranks. The committee also discussed how much influence and authority faculty governance has on salaries. Pete clarified that Budgetary Affairs committee is charged with setting faculty salary minima. They have some shared authority with the Budget Office regarding salaries. The important goal is to communicate how we can address salary equity issues on campus.

Wen and her office might need to redo the salary study that informed the 2022 memo and determine who is making under the minima and its impact, particularly given FSLA. Their office will use the NIH post-doc minimum.

The committee generally felt that the concept still holds water, but we need to redo analysis and consider the budgetary impact. Pete will send information to Wen to redo the original analysis. BFC RAC can then decide to discuss or convene a joint meeting with BAC. Pete will talk with BAC about the possibility of joining with us to try and move this memo forward a little more expeditiously.

The committee then did a quick overview of the remaining agenda topics including OVPFAAs provided guidance on enacting ACA-A5 (adopted April 2024) – “GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION REVIEWS FOR RESEARCH RANKS AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY-BLOOMINGTON” – dated October 24, 2024. What is not yet known is guidance for changing titles from Research Scientist to Professor. Many institutions only use the Research Professor titles. Leaving this up to units to decide and what fits there needs is important but there will likely be guardrails.

Next the committee briefly discussed updates on addressing the Nelson Memo which outlines a big task regarding data storage. Kosali Simon and Matt Link have made progress on data storage and structures being put in place. BFC RAC and all faculty input is welcomed on data storage and tech needs. We should expect a fairly major report on this in Spring 2025. A few other agenda items were only briefly discussed including that ACA A1 clean up is still needed, but there is no immediate progress. A new issue for BFC RAC was introduced regarding conflicts between the ease of the provision of research incentives, assuring IRB benefits and confidentiality protections, and the fiscal officers policies outlined in FIN-ACC-640 Policy regarding Expenditures: Incentives, Contests, Drawings, Games and Prizes. A few committee members shared their concern about these conflicts and how they were impacting research productivity and conduct. This will be a topic for a future BFC RAC meeting.

Committee members were encouraged to keep their ears to the ground regarding research concerns and to share concerns with the committee or bring these matters to the next meeting.

The BFC Research Affairs Committee will meet on the second Thursday of each month November 2024 through April 2025 from 3:00pm-4:00pm via zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Jillian Kinzie