

Research Planning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2021
2:30 p.m.
Zoom Video Conference
Minutes (corrected)

Members Present:

David Ford, Ph.D., chairperson
Noah Hillman, M.D.
Ratna Ray, Ph.D.
Daniela Salvemini, Ph.D., ex officio
John Walker, Ph.D.
Daniel Hoft, M.D., Ph.D.
Rich DiPaolo, Ph.D., ex officio
John Tavis, Ph.D.
Willis Samson, Ph.D.
Ajay Jain, M.D., Ph.D, ex officio
Gary Albers, M.D., ex officio
Angel Baldan, Ph.D., ex officio (as designate for Enrico Di Cera)
Ken Olliff, D.Min., MBA, ex officio non-voting
Tammy Burton, CPA, ex officio non-voting
Adriana Montaña, Ph.D., ex officio non-voting
John Long, D.V.M., ex officio non-voting

Members Not Present:

Enrico Di Cera, M.D., ex officio
Ravi Nayak, M.D., ex officio
Kim Schiel, M.D., ex officio
Oleg Kisselev, Ph.D., ex officio non-voting

Guests

Sandra Cornell
Stephanie Decker
Dagmar Ralphs
Maggie Rotermund
Carrie Berbermeyer

1. The Minutes of the June 23, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.

2. SLU Media/Public Relations Presentation

Carrie Berbermeyer, SLU Director of Public Relations, presented the scope and work of the University External and Internal Communications team.

Research projects the communications office looks to cover are projects that have a relevance and impact to a lay audience. Inherent human-interest element, conflict area, natural story to be told. What does this mean to the listener who is hearing this story today?

Action Item: The SLU Communications team will provide a roster with contact information for the communications office, together with an introduction of key points of when is the best opportunity to notify PR – when research receives a grant, something that might happen that is potentially newsworthy.

3. OVPR Update

Ken Oliff presented an update on the OVPR five year plan:

- Vision – SLU as a preeminent Jesuit Research University in St. Louis
 - Carnegie 1 research University
- Sinquefeld gift
- Growth in Research Funding – 7% CAGR overall, 15% CAGR outside School of Med, \$15.5M/ year in additional research expenditures
- Would like to significantly accelerate SLU's external grant funding
- Grant funding increased between 2020 and 2021 due to COVID related work
- First Five-year accomplishments
 - Chemistry – increase 22%
 - Family and community medicine – increase 28%
 - IM – growth of \$7.7M
- Challenges – SOM research is growing slowly; to combat this slow growth we have launched the SOM Research Growth Steering Committee. Also appointed a new Sr. Associate Research Dean, Dr. Montaña. SOM basic science is flat and with inflation we have fallen behind
- Biggest challenge – when you take out the Center for vaccine development clinical research shows a 16% decrease.
- Over the next five years, OVPR will focus on several key initiatives:
 - Accelerate Hiring Research intensive faculty
 - Grow research strengths
 - Establish Research growth as a SLU-wide priority
 - Solidify SLU's reputation as a leading research university
- Growth Areas
 - Base level at \$53M/yr at 2% growth; \$85M/yr in four years at which we would achieve Carnegie 1
- Comment (Dr. DiPaolo): if we are looking for big increases in infrastructure and in innovation publications applications, we have to support recruiting high impact researchers, and we need to be able to attract them with our cores and facilities.

4. Vice Dean Update - Dr. Montaña

Dr. Adriana Montaña, interim Sr. Associate Dean for Research, reported that she has been meeting with research representatives at the SOM and University to identifying issues that need to be addressed and to bring new research opportunities to the SOM. Specifically, Dr. Montaña highlighted that we are working to boost and support clinical research by streamlining the CTU.

We are also working on plans to revamp ICTS starting with seminars highlighting increased collaboration and enhancing revenue through licenses and research contracts.

Dr. Montaña also discussed website development.

Dr. Montaña presented the proposal to maximize grant revenue by developing programs to tackle current problems and establish a grant incubator

- Grant Incubator
 - Stage 1 path to recover to encourage and invest in committed PIs
 - Prelim. Studies – application to obtain the necessary experiments required to have a strong scientific application. Submit application to the SOM Research Opportunity Fund
 - Feedback on scientific merit of the app.
 - AHEAD will provide review of the applications statistics
 - Grant writing service will re-shape the application to submit to the NIH. Provider American Science & Medical writers
 - Stage 2 Increase productivity to boost programs of funded PIs
 - Stage 3 retain success to assist and maintain successful programs
 - Stage 4 faculty mentoring
- Dr. Ford asked when the pilot program will start.
 - Answer: we are hoping to start next month with 10 PI candidates
- OVPR budget allotted \$100,000 for this pilot program
- Dr. Ford cautioned that it may take significant coordination to find internal reviewers for grants.
 - Answer: Dr. Montaña hopes that the PI can identify reviewers outside the RPC
- Dr. Montaña would like the PI to submit the application four months prior to the deadline to allow the PI and reviewers sufficient time to complete the incubator process
- Dr. Walker asked how many PIs will be part of the pilot program?
 - Answer: preliminarily we have identified ten (10) PI candidates for the pilot program

5. Third-party Lease Requests for Research Space – Ms. Cornell

In her role, Ms. Cornell will manage the lease agreements with outside vendors that impact the medical campus research enterprise. Ms. Cornell shared the new intake form for gathering data to assess the request for leased space. The form will be made available to PIs and department chairs who receive inquiries from interested potential tenants, or others who are approached for leased research space in the SOM

The form includes all information necessary to complete the standard SLU license agreement template, as a tool to assist our legal team with negotiations.

Dr. Ford asked how many groups are currently leasing. Ms. Cornell responded that we have 15 or 16 lease agreements

Dr. Ford cautioned that we need to ensure that we are not losing space for recruits that we are trying to bring in. Ms. Cornell confirmed that the implementation of a standard request and review process, starting with submission of the form, is designed to address this very issue. She also reiterated that terms are based on the location of the space, and include annual rental increases to account for inflation.

6. Research Opportunity Fund – Dr. Ford

The program was suspended in April or May. Of the initial \$300,000 allocated for the program, \$66,000 remains. Dr. Ford shared his impression of the last few rounds of grant applications. Over the duration of the program, the quality of proposal submissions deteriorated. We also are not in favor of resubmissions if the application lacks innovation

Dr. DiPaolo agreed with Dr. Ford's assessment of the program, and that it should be redesigned to highlight that it is an innovation fund. Examples include single cell RNA sequencing and nano assembler

7. SOM Equipment list – Dr. Ford

Dr. Ford has received the list from MMI and is waiting on the list from Biochemistry and Pharm Phys.

The purpose of the list is to identify what is equipment available for shared use, and to allow for better evaluation of replacement requests going forward. All equipment should be listed. If a particular item of equipment is not available to be shared by other PIs or departments, a notation may be made in the space designated.

8. Other Business

Dr. DiPaolo mentioned the generator that runs the X Ray 320 radiator is at the ends of its life and needs to be replaced. A new one would cost \$100,000. Dr. DiPaolo is requesting that this spend request be put on the agenda for the next meeting for approval

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Decker
Chief of Staff, Dean's Office SOM