

**Present:** Jack Fletcher, Richard Bond, Alan Burns, Wynne Chin, Stuart Dryer, Allan Jacobson, Randy Lee, Jay Neal, Clayton Neighbors, Ezemenari Obasi, Christie Peters, Gregg Roman, Luis Torres, Spike Bordnick, Roth Bose, Mary Ann Ottinger, Cris Milligan, Rozlyn Reep

**Absent:** George Zouridakis, Alessandro Carrera, Stuart Long, Gregory Marinic, Robert Palmer, Shin-Shem Steven Pei, Pradeep Sharma, Gangbing Song, Michael Zvolensky

Welcome by the Chair: Dr. Fletcher welcomed everyone to the meeting at 1:35 PM.

Approval of the February Minutes: Dr. Fletcher asked members if they had any changes or revisions to the meeting minutes. Dr. Dryer made a motion to approve and Dr. Lee seconded. The minutes were approved.

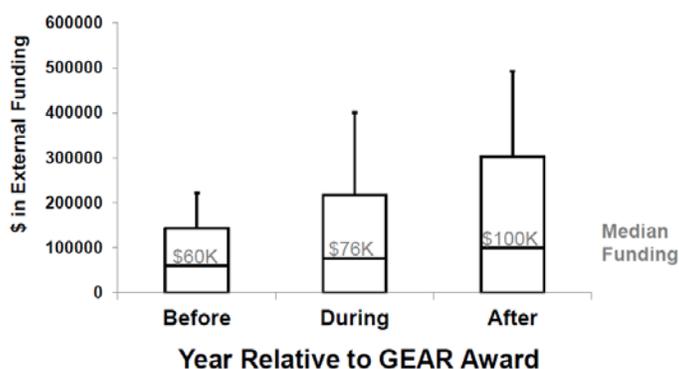
Subcommittee Reports:

**New Faculty/Small Grants:** Dr. Obasi informed the committee they are working on redrafting the guidelines. He plans on meeting with the interim Dean of CLASS to discuss a concern that was raised in regards to the 5 year rule. Dr. Fletcher asked the committee if there were other concerns; none were reported.

**GEAR:** Dr. Roman reported that his subcommittee met on March 11<sup>th</sup>. There were 23 individuals approved at the college level for GEAR. They will be reviewing full proposals. He addressed the question of the pre-proposals being too short and said that his subcommittee had discussed the best course of action. They decided that since the RSC doesn't actually see the pre-proposals, the college should decide what's best for their review. If a college feels a longer proposal is better for evaluation, they should be allowed to have that option. Dr. Fletcher asked the committee if they agreed with colleges deciding the length of pre-proposals for evaluation. Dr. Dryer stated that he thinks it's a good idea because not all colleges are the same and they should have the latitude to handle the pre-proposal requirements accordingly. The committee agreed.

Dr. Roman continued his report by saying his committee was asked to evaluate the GEAR program and its impact on research on campus. Dr. Ottinger provided data on award winners for 2012-2014. They looked at the data and funding obtained by grantee in 2012-13. They found the median went from \$60K – \$100K in external funding, with a total of over \$2 million:

Total Award Data from 2012 and 2013 Awardees



Total Yearly Increases for 20 PIs (2012 & 2013):  
 Before GEAR Year to After GEAR Year \$2,061,081 (\$103,054/PI)  
 During GEAR Year to After GEAR Year \$724,454 (\$36,222.7/PI)

The trend was noticeable. However, they felt the quantitative data were incomplete, and suggested the following:

- 1) Need self-reported data from PIs to understand which grants were specifically tied to GEAR awards. A questionnaire can be distributed to reach back a few years. The subcommittee also noted that some of these data exist on GEAR applications.
- 2) Continue the analysis for several more years, bring in more cohorts, and measure the impact on funding out to year 3 post GEAR year.
- 3) Include for comparison GEAR applicants that did not receive an award.

Dr. Ottinger stated that DOR only has complete GEAR data starting in 2013. Dr. Roman said the recommendation will be to look at data from now and into the future to better understand the effects of the award. He said it would help if they had self-report data from the PI's. They would like to see a year plus 3. His committee felt the qualitative data was strong, and if funding keeps going up, they need to know if it's consistent with investigators. The best comparative group would be those who applied. Dr. Fletcher said it would be significant to see if someone submitted a grant even if it wasn't successful for the GEAR competition. He mentioned setting up a questionnaire in order to survey the GEAR recipients. Dr. Roman said his subcommittee suggested a questionnaire to be developed. It could be sent to PI's from past years to collect data as well. The GEAR program has high visibility and it is an important indicator of University support for research. Curtailing the program would be perceived negatively. Dr. Roman noticed a large number of applicants and stated that the applicant number seems to be growing. He saw an increase in collaborations as well as benefits that are hard to quantify, including new publications.

The subcommittee asked if the GEAR award should be adjusted for inflation, since the maximum award level has been unchanged since the program's inception in 2002. According to the National Institute of Health Office of Budget, the average change in Biomedical Research and Development Index from 2002 until 2015 is 3.1%. So, \$30,000 in 2002 biomedical research dollars is worth approximately \$44,640 biomedical research dollars in 2015. Because of the increasing number of applicants, the percentage of success has been dropping. They suggested that DOR increase the pool of money so incentive and positive effects can be expanded.

Dr. Lee asked Dr. Roman "if you were to prioritize, would you increase the number of awards or the amount?" Dr. Roman thinks the number of awards is important, but he wouldn't ignore the importance of the amount. Dr. Dryer stated the major impact of GEAR is to increase the number of submissions, so the first priority would be to increase the number of awards. \$30K is fairly substantial in order to allow an investigator to get one thing they need. Dr. Lee stated that he thinks they all agree.

Dr. Torres raised a question regarding the GEAR pre-proposal not having enough information. He asked if there was any reason why a full proposal was not required at the college level. If full proposals were required, feedback could be sent back to PI's in order to produce stronger proposals - especially if the idea is to pilot data to get outside grants as well as developing grant writing skills. Dr. Lee stated that when he was chair of GEAR, he had the same philosophy - GEAR should lead to a full submission to NSF, etc. which is why it was 7 pages long. They had everyone write full proposals. Dr. Fletcher said in his department there were 2 proposals that were written and not funded by the RSC; however, both investigators turned them into successful grants. R03's are 7 page proposals.

Dr. Obasi said some colleges are at a disadvantage because they're not bringing in as much funds. Dr. Roman's committee discussed the demographics of funding. There was some discrepancy in 2002 because there was a college that did not receive as much money. To fund the program, you need money coming back. One criteria the committee will look at is the likelihood of external funding.

Dr. Fletcher stated that they now have competing recommendations for proposal length: require everyone to have their proposal be a certain length or let the colleges decide. Another recommendation will be the collection of more data to at least create a comparison group (see if applicants actually submitted an application because of their GEAR experience).

Dr. Roman stated his subcommittee liked the idea of a college having the flexibility to set the length. Dr. Torres said if they have a system at the college level where interested folks have to submit a full proposal, you probably wouldn't have as many proposals submitted, which in turn makes the review process easier for the committee. People who do not get selected can have a proposal that could be submitted elsewhere. Dr. Dryer said he was not sure the value of feedback would be that helpful. For instance, people within his own college may not fully understand

what he does. Dr. Obasi said he likes the idea of things being done at the college level, and that everyone gets written feedback - it's a teaching and mentoring tool. Dr. Roman said the question is whether the pre-proposal format belongs in the college. What his committee recommends is that the RSC make a suggestion of what the proposals should be. They can make a recommendation that the college looks at the full proposal and provides feedback, but it's up to the college. The RSC agreed.

A question was raised as to whether the focus should not only be on the amount awarded, but did GEAR recipients submit proposals? Dr. Litvinov did a similar study and may have data from 2002. The RSC agreed that a GEAR survey was a reasonable thing to do.

Dr Burns raised the issue of colleges ranking pre-proposals. He recalled colleges being asked to rank pre-proposals during review last year. He does not think it's good for the GEAR committee to have that information. Dr. Roman said he would like to receive proposals that are not ranked; however, NSM would like the committee to know what their rankings. They'll provide the ranking information so he has it during discussions. Dr. Lee said at NSM, proposals go to the review committee which are given numbers for criteria. Discussion reflected differing factors that may affect the rankings.

Dr. Fletcher said it seemed there was an agreement that the grants should be reviewed without knowledge of rankings, and that rankings will be provided later. Dr. Bose asked if NSM was the only college that ranked its pre-proposals. Dr. Fletcher said they can check to see if NSM was the only college that ranked. Dr. Roman said the committee feels the information will be useful, but not that weighty. Dr. Obasi pointed out that its additional data. Dr. Torres expressed agreement with Dr. Obasi. Dr. Roman said he would like to propose that the GEAR subcommittee not receive the college rankings. The RSC agreed. Dr. Fletcher suggested that they consider a revision to the GEAR guidelines next year requesting a ranking.

Dr. Roman said he would like to recommend an increase in the number of slots for proposals. Dr. Bose said that in order to increase funding, they'll need more data. Dr. Fletcher suggested that the DOR and committee collect more data and see outcomes. Dr. Ottinger thinks control data will be helpful starting from 2013 and that she can provide whatever data she has so far. Dr. Fletcher said they'll need to get Dr. Litvinov's data as well. Dr. Dryer asked if there was information on other universities. Dr. Bose said yes, that universities have the same program and that they are all consistent. If you provide funds for specific projects, they are an investment. Dr. Dryer asked if our data don't show significance, could information from other universities be a determining factor in continuing the program. Dr. Bose said the only problem is that he needs data showing support for additional funds. Dr. Roman said he would be happy to provide as much data as possible.

Dr. Fletcher expressed appreciation for the work of the GEAR subcommittee.

Status Report by VC/VP Dr. Bose: Dr. Fletcher welcomed Dr. Bose to the meeting and invited him to give a report.

Dr. Bose told the committee he was sorry he missed last month's meeting. He gave the following report:

- There's a lot happening at the state level. There are two major designated funds totaling over \$30 million: Texas Knowledge Fund and Development Fund. The House committee has stripped the funds from the entire Texas system. Dr. Carlucci will present the information when discussing the budget at the next Faculty Senate meeting.
- Dr. Chin informed the committee that the Provost sent a letter to the Deans about the budget. The letter will be circulated via email. The budget discussion at the next Faculty Senate meeting will provide an overview of the legislative process and review the dissemination of funds when the University receives a sum of money. Dr. Chin encouraged members to attend the meeting as well as their colleagues. It will give folks an understanding of what Dr. Bose is experiencing.
- Dr. Bose hopes his department will not receive a cut. He asked Dr. Jacobson to help him draft an op-ed.
- The second issue Dr. Bose brought up was the tuition discussion from the previous meeting. He stated that whatever the Provost decides, he'll implement. He also stated that matching funds will require a separate cost center to meet auditing regulations, so they have to show separate accounting. There's a uniformity issue as well (non-PhD vs. PhD), and there has to be a policy that protects the University. Dr. Bose has been talking to the Provost's office about these issues. Dr. Fletcher stated that Dr. Litvinov has stated that the funds are only for PhD and certain MA students. He said it's important for members of the committee to talk to Dr. Litvinov about the issue since it has not been adequately resolved. The faculty senate has a committee looking at the issue and this group that will begin working with Dr. Litvinov on how to maintain support for the GTF.

#### Subcommittee Reports Continued:

**Core Facilities:** Dr. Burns reported that the committee met and reviewed one application. They agreed unanimously that the proposal should not be funded, the major factor a lack of a management plan. He talked with Dr. Ottinger and they agreed to give the critique to Dr. Meen. Dr. Meen is anxious to apply again. Dr. Fletcher stated that Dr. Bose approved the RSC's recommendation to re-compete the core facilities program.

Dr. Burns stated that his subcommittee looked at timing and decided on an October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. That way the committee can provide feedback and give information to external reviewers on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee will meet in December to go over the review. If a proposal is selected for funding, it will be funded in January.

**Excellence:** Dr. Neighbors reported that the committee received 9 nominations at the Assistant Professor level, 7 nominations at the Associate Professor level, and 8 nominations at the Professor level. They rated each application on the criteria outlined in the guidelines. They decided on two nominees for both Assistant and Associate levels, but are still discussing nominees for the Professor level. Dr. Neighbors proposed that the subcommittee vote and rank the candidates that were closely ranked at the professor level. It was decided that the RSC will vote on the nominees at the next meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> and that an announcement will be made that same day. Dr. Fletcher added that this will give Dr. Bose time to review the nominations. After the meeting, the RSC was informed that voting on April 17 would not give Faculty Affairs enough time to prepare for the awards ceremony. Dr. Fletcher sent an email proposing a vote by email after the subcommittee resolved the awards at the professor level.

**Research Misconduct Policy:** Dr. Fletcher stated that some members had concerns about the language in the Research Misconduct Policy after it was circulated for a vote. He has been working with Ms. Rochford. One issue was understanding the timeline and written requirements, which was language from the federal document brought into the policy.

Dr. Lee said he went through the document and made a few changes. He sent the changes to Dr. Fletcher that morning. On page 7 on the Conducting Assessment and Inquiry, Dr. Palmer's concern was on the assessment stage. Dr. Lee thought the assessment should have a timeline and Dr. Palmer felt it shouldn't be rushed. Dr. Lee thinks the RSC has an obligation to protect the respondent. The policy currently says the assessment period will be brief. He is fine with it as long as there's an understanding of flexibility. He would like to know the right language.

Dr. Bose said no RIO is going to rush without looking through all the documents. They take it very seriously and there is due diligence. The RIO can always ask the respondent or complainant for more time if needed. Dr. Lee stated that he thinks there is no timeline on the assessment, and that the time starts when the inquiry starts. Dr. Bose stated that some documentation can't be reviewed in a week. Dr. Fletcher stated that the period of allegation has no timeline. Dr. Lee said the respondent is going to be concerned and thinks there should be something in the policy that says the RIO should follow up with the respondent. He also expressed concern about the psychological well-being of the respondent and thinks they have an obligation of keeping that person informed. He doesn't think the document addresses that issue.

Dr. Bose said the complainant might think communication with the respondent could appear excessive. Dr. Lee suggested sending a message like "assessment is ongoing" or something similar. Dr. Bose stated that the message may actually worry the respondent, and that there's clear language that it's an assessment, and no one has been accused.

Dr. Fletcher said he can talk to Ms. Rochford about adding language and that she'll be concerned about alignment with federal policy. Besides adding language, he asked members if they had any other concerns. Dr. Lee stated he had one more. On page 11 regarding the notification to the respondent and the time to respond. He thinks a time should be mentioned. Dr. Fletcher stated there's already a 60 day time limit in the guidelines. Dr. Torres said it sounded like Dr. Lee's concern was it sounded one sided and there's a presumption of guilt.

There was a discussion about different government agencies having different requirements in their guidelines regarding an inquiry. Dr. Fletcher suggested that they see what groups require it.

Dr. Fletcher said he'll take the suggested edits to Ms. Rochford then circulate the updates for a vote via email.

#### New Business:

**Nomination of Women to the RSC:** Dr. Fletcher said it was time to nominate folks for the RSC and would like to observe that there's limited female representation. He would like for members to consider nominating women who are credible scientists. Dr. Fletcher invited Dr. Ottinger to add to his statement. She said she would be happy to help in this endeavor.

**Bills on Genetics:** Dr. Fletcher said there were bills to control the use of genetic material in the legislature. It would have obstructed the ability to do genetic research. The bills have been pulled so it's now a non-issue.

#### New Items:

- Dr. Ottinger informed the committee that her office in conjunction with the Blaffer Art Museum completed a series of workshops. She appreciated the attendance and said the workshops were successful. Mr. Rosengren, Deputy Director at Blaffer, calculated over 850 attendees total for the Blaffer lecture series.
- Dr. Chin told the committee that April 27<sup>th</sup> will be the Faculty Senate retreat. They will talk about general strategic planning and missions. He hopes everyone can make it. The retreat will be held in the Grand Salon. He also encouraged members to attend the Faculty Senate meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup> to learn about the budget.

Dr. Roman made a motion to adjourn and Dr. Chin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:09 PM.

**The next meeting will be Friday, April 17 at 1:30 PM in the Faculty Senate Conference Room (MD Anderson Library).**