Research Operations Council
May 7, 2009, 9 a.m.
MCI Multipurpose Room

Attendees: See attached roster.

Dr. Russ Lea called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Russ Lea, Vice President for Research, Office of Research Administration

Dr. Lea welcomed the Council members and thanked them for their continued participation and support, and the members were asked to introduce themselves to the group. During the process of introductions, Dusty Layton introduced Ms. Allison Henry, the new Assistant Director, Research Compliance and Assurance.

An update of ERA Software Systems was provided. It was noted that 30% of Universities have a tool for the submission of grants electronically. ERA includes a standard template, and is a cost effective, web-based tool. Dr. Lea will arrange for a demonstration of the software and will provide details to the Council as soon as arrangements are made.

Dr. Lea informed of the White House Press Secretary's March 9th Memorandum on Scientific Integrity recently published in the Federal Register, and provided copies to the Council.

Dr. Lea provided an update on USA's incentive plans for faculty.

One plan captures faculty release time. Up to $15,000 in release time monies can go back to a faculty member, depending on the agency involved. It was noted that the College of Medicine does not participate in this program.

The second plan provides incentives to qualifying principal investigators, and co-principal investigators for grant submissions to federal agencies according to the following guidelines:

1) A proposal must be written that will be competitively reviewed by any federal agency for over $50K (total) between now and September 30, 2010. Proposals competitively reviewed by state agencies (≥$50K) with identifiable ARRA flow down also qualify. Proposals written as *service contracts* do not qualify.
2) Proposal must be routed through a unit peer review committee (colleges will decide how to manage and certify this to my office).
3) Once a proposal has been peer reviewed and submitted, a $1,000 payment to the PI and $500 payments each to no more than two Co-PIs will be made.
4) If a proposal is funded, a $2,000 payment will be made to the PI and $500 payments each will be made to no more than two Co-PIs.
5) There is no limit on the incentive payments that can be made to individual PIs and Co-PIs as long as new proposals are developed and submitted to competitive federal programs prior to Sept. 30, 2010.

6) Existing projects that receive funding through supplements or extensions do not qualify.

These funds are provided as one-time awards, and are not subject to state retirement.

William Guess, Director, Safety/Environmental Compliance

Mr. Guess provided information to the Council on Safety issues as they relate to research, specifically, Highly Toxic Gases, Chemicals, and General Safety. And, he informed the Council that a detailed safety plan must be in place whenever toxic gases are used, and chemical use must be reported to the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office.

Environmental Compliance was also addressed. The question of how research might impact on the environment was the area of concern.

In all cases, whenever there is a question regarding a safety or environmental issue, the Safety and environmental Compliance Office should be contacted for guidance.

Dusty Layton, Director, Research Compliance and Assurance

Ms. Layton provided the Council with copies of the April 2009 Research Compliance Newsletter which provided guidelines for the mentoring of postdoctoral fellows; and addressed issues relating to the transportation of, or travel with, research materials and the need for Material Transfer Agreements; as well as other topics.

It was noted that Research Compliance Reviews should be completed prior to award. When reviews are not completed prior to award, restrictions may be imposed, or an award may be denied. It was recommended that, whenever questions arise on this issue, the Office of Research Compliance and Assurance should be contacted for guidance. This will avoid impeding access to grant funds.

Ben Tipton, Associate Controller, Grants and Contracts Accounting

Mr. Tipton provided information on the process of charging F&A items as Direct Costs to grants. Complete the proper forms up-front for approval. This will expedite the process and avoid problems during audits. Costs are "normal types of expenses." A term for exception is "unlike circumstance." Equipment that is charged to a grant should be utilized 100% for the purpose reported.

Mr. Tipton informed that the University, as a cost-saving measure, is moving toward the practice of direct depositing monies to vendor accounts rather than sending checks through the mail. Email notifications will be sent to vendors at the time of funds transfer.

Copies of the new reporting forms: 1) *Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) Exception Form (Pre-Award) for Federal and Federal Flow-Through Awards* and the 2) *OMB A-21 Exception Request Post Award for Federal and Federal Flow-Through Awards* were provided to the members. The new forms should be utilized as soon as possible. It does not matter whether agency approval has been received. The CAS Exception Form is to be used at proposal submission, and the OMB A-21 Exception Request is to be used in mid-process and for post award decisions. It was noted that copies of the original forms may be attached with each subsequent "like" purchase. It was noted that the ERA software, a paperless process, would be another way to go.

Gina Hedberg, Director, Office of Grants Administration

Ms. Hedberg provided the Council with an update on ARRA Reporting.

She informed the Council of a replacement for the *Preliminary Account Request* form. That form will be titled *Preliminary Fund Request* and should be on the Grants Administration website within a week. It was noted that the new form includes a Match Box to alert the Business Office to create a fund number for the matching monies (a "risk" account), and that the signatures on these forms are essentially guarantees.

When the website is completed, information on Recovery Act Reporting can be accessed from FederalReporting.gov. This site, once enabled, will serve as the gateway for recipients of federal funds to meet the reporting requirements of Section 1512 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Ms. Hedberg reminded the Council that Recovery Act Grant funds must be segregated from other funds and reporting processes. From the department level up, this must be a collaborative effort. Transparency is essential. The Government has imposed another reporting layer to include the state-level as well. Quarterly reporting will be required, and council members should prepare for these reporting deadlines. Ms. Hedberg will train when final information becomes available, and provide a checklist of the elements required for state and federal reporting.

Ms. Hedberg reminded the Council that there are no cost extensions on the recovery monies. Any funds that are not used will be lost. Reporting of progress details should be done and we must stay on track. If USA is found to be at risk on an account, that account will be frozen—no exceptions.

Steve Croft, Associate Director, Sponsored Programs

Mr. Croft reported to the Council on information gleaned from the May 3–6, 2009 NCURA Region III meeting as noted below:

ARRA reporting requirements are still under development. Having grantees reports directly to OMB/Recovery.gov is a new twist for the agencies in designing their reporting forms/processes.

NIH is providing supplements to existing awards using ARRA funds. NSF will not supplement current projects, but will go back to previously declined proposals and fund some with ARRA funds.

NSF projects using ARRA funds will be reviewed closely to assure steady expenditure of the funds. Projects not doing so are subject to revocation.

NSF will re-write its salary policy again this summer. The policy rewritten at the end of last year has caused investigators to think they cannot apply for any new NSF projects if they already have 2 months of support from NSF. This was not the agency's intention.

Mr. Croft stated that he would email ROC members a link to the NCURA Conference site where they can view and download the PowerPoint slides and handouts from all of the workshops.

Ashley Turbeville, Director, Health Systems Grant Administration

Ms. Turbeville advised the Council that, of the ARRA Grants/Challenge Grant Applications submitted to-date, one proposal already appears to have been funded.

The focus moved on to the issue of IRB/IACUC Information for NIH Grant Applications. Ms. Turbeville informed that, when human subjects are involved, proper restrictions must be written into the proposals. The Council was provided with copies of *PHS SF424, Part I: Instructions for Preparing and Submitting an Application*, which includes the requirements to be met when vertebrate animals are involved in a research project, as well as a screen shot of http://www.southalabama.edu/researchcompliance/animalcare.html which includes information on animal care and use in research projects. Council members were asked to check with Ms. Layton or with Ms. Turbeville for help "beforehand" to avoid problems.

The Council was provided with an overview of the procedures to be followed when engaging consultants on funded grants, and the members were referred to Circular A-133 which contained information on sub-recipient and vendor determinations. A copy of the NIH Policy Statement dealing with consultant services was also provided for reference. And, it was noted that the *Authorization to Provide Services* and the *Independent Contractor Consulting Agreement* forms could be obtained from the business office website.

Ms. Turbeville added that independent conflict of commitment statements should be submitted for every funded project.

With there being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra S. Corry
Recorder

Research Operations Council
May 7, 2009 - 9 a.m.
Attendance Roster

Rachel	Backlin	Grants Administration Specialist, Neurology/Stroke Ctr - UMC
Ken	Bloch	Admin, ONO Clinical Services, MCI
Joanne	Bowen	Financial Operations Specialist, Allied Health
Judy	Burnham	Director, Biomedical Library
Allison	Carter	Grants Administration, Pediatrics
Amy	Clay	Accountant II, Health Services Business Office
Penny	Cook	Manager, COM, Physiology
Kathy	Cunningham	Grants Administration Specialist, Grants Administration
Gina	Hedberg	Director, Grants Administration
LeeAnn	Kendrick	Project Dir, Community Health, Ctr for Healthy Communities
Anita	Kirkland	Secretary V, Grants Administration
Charlene	Lamonte	Financial Operations Specialist, Ctr for Lung Biopsy
Dusty	Layton	Director, Research Compliance & Assurance
Russ	Lea	Vice President for Research
Terry	Lefeaux	Grants Administration Specialist, MCI - Administration
Regina	McCreary	Financial Operations Specialist, Education
Angie	McKinnell	Grants Operations Specialist, Marine Sciences
Judi	Naylor	Financial Operations Specialist, Pharmacology
Robin	Nicholas	Secretary V, Center for Healthy Communities
Laura	O'Connor	Dir, Program Admin OEHT, Ctr for Strategic Health Innovation
Mel	Parnell	Clinical Nurse III, Neurology
Robert	Phelps	Accountant II, College of Medicine Business Office
Maggie	Pyle	Director, Sponsored Programs
Susan	Sansing	Director, Health Sciences Finance & Administration
Jan	Sauls	Secretary V, Pharmacology
Tammy	Silcox	Manager, Grants & Contracts Accounting
Ben	Tipton	Associate Controller, Grants and Contracts Accounting
Ashley	Turbeville	Director, Health Systems Grant Administration
Judy	Watson	Secretary IV, Mitchell Cancer Institute
Kelly	Wood	Assistant Business Manager, Health Sciences Business Office
Sandy	Worley	Secretary V, Physiology