



CSS Research Committee Minutes

September 21, 2022

8:30 a.m.

Via Zoom

Present Kurt Rademaker (ANP), Sheila Maxwell (CJ), Jay Wilson (EC), Sharon Zhong (GEO/Chair FS22), Ryan Bowles (HDFS/Chair SS23), Mevan Jayasinghe (HRLR), Jason Moser (PSY), Peilei Fan (SPDC), Angie Kennedy (SW), Anna Maria Santiago (CSS Dean's Office)

Absent Emine Evered (HST); Xuefei Ren (Sociology), Christian Houle (PLS)

Minutes taken by Douglas Hissong (CSS Dean's Office)

Santiago confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 8:34 am.

1. Selection of Research Committee Chair

- Bowles proposes a Co-Chair situation in which Bowles will chair the 2nd Semester if the committee can find someone to lead the 1st Semester.
- Zhong takes up the mantle to chair FS22 with Bowles chairing SS23.

2. Approval of April 2022 Minutes

- The minutes were approved.

3. Approval of the agenda

- The agenda was approved.

4. Restructuring of College Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives (ORSI)

- Santiago explains the workflow and general work duties of the Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives, Approvals of proposals, export control and visa approvals, ancillary reviews for HRPP at times, pre-award support, F & A waivers, cost-share commitments, and promotion of research conducted by the College researchers.
- Only college at MSU with decentralized pre-award research administration.
- Last year units in the College lost a non-insignificant number of research administrators.
- Wilson questions about what centralizing research administration means.
 - Santiago explains that only a couple of units within the College have full-time pre-award support. Psychology was the only one until they lost their research

- administrator to retirement. Currently the other units take primary responsibility for pre-award support.
- Santiago explains that with ~600 investigators – 60 alone for Psychology – having less than full time, dedicated research administrator delivers less consistent support across the College.
 - Santiago clarifies that the Office of Research already reviews all proposal submissions, but the office would be adding pre-award support services and proposal submissions working directly with the College researchers.
- Barbara Cernadas specifically, has been stepping in to handle grant support for most of the past year.
 - The College would be expanding the number of certified research administrators to provide services to all researchers in the College.
 - Currently in the process of hiring a consistent, trained, and certified research administrator staff.
 - Other units at the University have had centralized research administration for a decade or more. Expansion of our services will better serve our researchers, especially with pre-award support.
 - Also asked to amplify and elevate strategic initiatives, especially those aligned with the University's strategic plan.
 - Bowles notes the need to keep in mind the diversity of the College -- both in terms of topic and sponsors and geographically, centralizing grant support more challenging. Resistance comes from how personal pre-award is and can be.
 - Example -- constant revisions of budget might take much longer for each unit and not having someone nearby makes it very difficult.
 - Bowles poses a question as to how other universities deal with such processes.
 - Santiago notes that they just started a Big Ten Academic Alliance group for associate deans of research. Generally, research administration is centralized throughout the Big Ten for economies of scale.
 - If an individual research administrator is not around, there is still someone who can pick up the work.
 - The biggest problem is that the units scramble to try to figure out what to do when their Research Administrator is unavailable.
 - Most of the College fiscal officers do not know how to do pre-award research administration because it is a set of specialized skills.
 - Centralization provides consistent high-quality services for a group of people.
 - Santiago addresses the other concern regarding personal relationships. The College has been building relationships with researchers throughout the pandemic. What was once an in-person conversation is now a Zoom call.
 - That while the relationship isn't the same, it can still be built and can still succeed in developing the same outcome as before.

- In the current hiring process, we are being intentional about identifying individuals with prior experience with a range of different sponsors to have good coverage across the board.
 - People who are well versed in international, domestic, foundations, etc. to ensure a good mix of skills.
 - Santiago also mentions that at least one will be a training hire, noting the difficulty with hiring at this time.
- Bowles asked if we do move to a centralized office, what would the timeline look like.
 - We're already phasing it in, with several units are already coming on board with this.
 - Psychology, the largest one, all their pre-award support will be done at the college level.
 - Santiago will be talking with each of the chairs and directors and trying to see what makes sense for each.
 - They are not forcing anyone, but they want the units to see that at the end of the day most researchers will be happier knowing that there is a team that is well trained and that can manage the work that is needed.
- Maxwell asked does the college fund it or do the units have to collectively fund it?
 - Currently, unit research administrators are funded using non-recurring or soft money indirect cost recovery funds from grants. The College is currently discussing what kind of funding model might be appropriate but for now will be providing the support for the new hires.
- Bowles asks for clarification on the number of people to be hired.
 - Santiago replies that they are hiring three people and with Cernadas as the research manager there will be four.
 - Two Research Administrators (level two) and one Research Administrator (level one).

5. Update on research changes

- The College was asked by the Provost Office to develop a “mini” strategic planning grant initiative of awards of up to \$25,000. The topic is at the intersection of problematic policing, racial injustice and safety in communities of color.
 - The RFP will be shared with researchers all over campus. This RFP is targeted for Michigan communities and is not aimed at researchers who want to move into this area of research.
 - Much like all strategic program initiative grants at MSU, the RFP is meant for researchers who have already been working in this area and would be poised to either, further testing of an intervention or a program working with community partners.
 - We anticipate awarding 5 of these grants in the Fall 2022 semester.
- The College has been asked to get involved with is directly tied to the strategic plan and the university's plan to foster collaborative relationships amongst researchers who are doing climate research.
 - We were asked to co-sponsor an upcoming climate justice and environmental ethics convening.

- This is co-sponsored by Social Science, Arts and Letters, and the Office of Research and Innovation.
- The convening will be held on October 20th from 3pm – 5pm at the MSU Union.
- There will be a panel of some of our existing scholars talking about where they see the state of that interdisciplinary field, what are some of the opportunities, and where might MSU be poised to really take some leadership role in that work.
- What we're trying to do is help people get to network with others on campus in this area. Offering small seed grants to help them develop something that would evolve into a proposal that would be submitted in a year's time.
 - This is not going to be the only SPG this year.
- Increasing opportunities for funding and to increase the amount of small grants awards within our college to make us more attractive to faculty.
- If we going to do these larger types of grants we did not want to overburden committee members doing everything. Especially for this SPG on problematic policing, racial injustice and safety in communities of color, there will be reviewers not only across the College but also across the University, along with some community reviewers.
- The call is: At the intersections of problematic policing, racial injustice, and safety in communities of color. What we're trying to do is look at interventions that would mitigate the underlining environmental, social, and institutional contexts in order to promote safety in communities of color. What they are really looking for are proposals that focus on the design and evaluations of interventions aimed at curbing violence found at those intersections – policing, racial injustice and safety. Once again, this is a Michigan only RFP. We are not interested in projects happening outside of Michigan.

Zhong opens the floor to questions again.

None.

6. Research priorities for 2022-23 and beyond

Zhong introduces the final topic of the agenda, research priorities for the current academic year and beyond.

- What are some of the issues you'd like to see the committee work with? That would shape the work that we'll be doing this year.
- Fan notes that pre-award support is something that units should and would be very interested in across the College.
 - Also focus on the social science strengths – for instance, climate change is a big thing for me, but, for the College, social justice would be a thread that we all have in common.
- Santiago mentions another upcoming initiative because Santiago does not have dates, but we are going to hold a future of work convening we think in February [2023].
 - We are working with six interested partner colleges, and as some of you might not know we invested in the future award as a thematic area as a College and so this is one of their big events for that thematic area.

- We are continuing to work with the four other thematic areas that we supported through hires and seed funding. Those are minority politics; marginalized youths; sexual and gender minorities in terms of their physical/mental health over a lifespan, and finally coastlines and peoples. We are still invested in their work and their visibility. Santiago asks what are other areas the College should be looking at?
- Moser wishes to jump back to the administrative reorganization. It would be great to evaluate the centralization of research administration as it is happening. Having some sort of metrics and keeping track of stats.
- Santiago notes that process and overall evaluation was always a part of their plan with this rollout. Santiago says that investigators are already asked about satisfaction when they submit proposals, but currently very few responses come back to the College.
- Wilson, I would like to know more about this future of work initiative. Santiago explains there is a [website](#) for all the thematic areas so there is a page with future work on there.
- Wilson notes that seem to be related to the future of cities, but now with the work from home that's different as well.

7. Matters arising.

Zhong asks for other matters, receives none.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:34 am.