



# Research Committee Meeting Minutes

**WEDNESDAY – September 11, 2024, 8:30-9:30 a.m.**

**Attendees:** Joseph Hefner (ANP), Steven Chermak (SCJ) Ben Bushong (EC), Sharon Zhong (GEO), Anhalee Brincks (HDFS), Maite Tapia (HRLR), Emine Evered (HST), Nazita Lajevardi (PLS), Jason Moser (PSY), Sheila Maxwell (SCJ), Stephen Gasteyer (SOC), Angie Kennedy (SSW), Zeenat Kotval-Karamchandani (URP), Angelique Willis (Graduate Student Rep), Riley Michael (Undergraduate Student Rep) Barbara Cernadas (CSS Dean's Office), Anna Maria Santiago (CSS Dean's Office).

**The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m.**

- 1. Approval of the agenda.** Motion to approve by Stephen Gasteyer, Seconded by Zeenat Kotval-K.
- 2. May 2024 minutes.** Motion to approve by Zeenat Kotval-K. Seconded by Ben Bushong. Abstentions: Brincks, Bushong, Chermak, Evered, Gasteyer, Hefner, Lajevardi, Tapia, Zhong. Will send out future meeting minutes via email for review and approval.
- 3. Selection of the Research Committee Chair.**

Moser will end his service as Chair since he is going to be on sabbatical during the Spring 2025 semester. Opened for discussion and nominations. Chair facilitates the meeting, bringing matters arising to the attention of the committee. The Office of Research and Strategic Initiatives (ORSI) provides support to the committee and do the background legwork for College RFPs and award nominations. Santiago's role is ex-officio on the committee. Any committee member can raise issues for discussion to the Chair and/or larger committee. Bushong volunteered to serve as Chair. Supported by Chermak and other members of the committee. Motion by Zeenat Kotval K nominating Bushong to serve as Research Committee Chair; seconded by Chermak.
- 4. Updated University and College research administration policies and procedures.**

Santiago encouraged committee members to peruse the ORSI weekly research newsletters for updates. On the College side, there was a small change in the wording of one sentence in the Proposal Submission Deadline Policy in July, 2024. Please make sure that faculty members in your unit are aware that they need to follow that policy. The policy is aimed at facilitating the workflow of the PIs and the ORSI staff. The most significant change that occurred this summer was with an Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) policy regarding final closeouts of research grants. OSP will no longer tolerate late submissions of grant-related invoices, labor costs, receipts, etc. for grants that are ending. That is a major shift that researchers need to be aware of and summarized in several ORSI newsletters with links to more information at the OSP website. For units being served by ORSI staff, we are automatically sending information to PIs about closeouts and reminding them about the new policy. OSP/CGA is underscoring that PIs are ultimately responsible for processing all grant expenditures in a timely manner. This also was shared with chairs, directors and unit fiscal officers.

Lajevardi asked about the timeline for reporting of grant expenditures. Santiago noted that the reporting window depends on the sponsor deadlines for the final technical and financial reports (e.g., 30, 60, 90 days). OSP/CGA is trying to eliminate very late reporting of research grant expenditures. If expenses are disallowed because they were not filed in a timely manner, units will have to pay for those expenses.

Growing federal oversight regarding export control issues, including participation in non-domestic talent programs and the requirements for disclosure of such participation. This disclosure of current and past participation is required by the federal government for all federal grant programs. Current participation may restrict eligibility to apply for certain federal grant programs.

Gasteyer mentioned concerns about reporting conference presentations or similar activities and being told that was required. Santiago identified resources available to help faculty to determine if their participation requires disclosure. She encouraged faculty to contact the Office of Research Regulatory Services at MSU.

## **5. Research priorities for the 2024-25 academic year.**

There was a brainstorming discussion of ideas and potential priorities.

Gasteyer noted that there was an initiative around peacebuilding and peacemaking in Spring 2024 and asked if we had any projects. Santiago reported that we received a handful of proposals and funded several of them. There was a request from the 2023-24 committee to repeat this RFP again. The 2023-24 committee also suggested re-issuing a second call around generative AI. Dean Donnellan asked about an RFP related to civil discourse. This discussion was to surface potential RFP topics.

Bushong asked if there were sufficient submissions to justify another RFP on generative AI. Santiago noted the considerable interest campus wide about this topic. Social Science received a request from the Provost's Office about taking the lead on research focusing on the social, behavioral, and economic implications of AI. The first call was in response to that request. We funded several projects from that call.

Gasteyer – could you remind us about the timeline and when these might be looking at for these RFPs? Santiago reported that the 2023-24 committee wanted to see a longer lead time before proposal deadlines. We are trying to balance the clear request to have more time vs. the timeliness in responding to some of these topics. Also need to consider the workload this presents to the Research Committee who will review these proposals.

Lajevardi mentioned concerns about the term civil discourse because it suggests some people are uncivil. She asked about expanding this to be open discourse or something that's not pejorative about groups of people who may be perceived as being uncivil or other tropes about certain populations. Given what's happening in the world, it would be incredibly valuable to have the College support research in this area.

Santiago mentioned that the phrase reflected a statement from President Guskiewicz in one of his early communications to the MSU community. Open to other terms to reflect meaningful, respectful conversations. What about "civic" discourse?

Also interested in releasing another call for proposals for the purchase of proprietary datasets not available through some of the consortia we participate in.

Moser mentioned a potential call on social/behavioral health. Santiago noted that we are co-sponsoring with ACORN a 2025 call for proposals for small grants in the area of addictions.

Chermak suggests broadening scope while allowing it to feel tied to other themes (e.g., mental health interventions and AI).

Bushong noted a natural connection between civic discourse and mental health.

Responded to Riley's query about support for student research, Santiago mentioned funding mechanisms for students through the Office of Undergraduate Studies and Office of Graduate Studies.

Bushong summarized three topical areas: second round of peacemaking, peacebuilding and civic discourse; second round of generative AI; and a call on interdisciplinary work on behavioral health.

Other priorities for 2024-25 include continued concerns with IRB especially for those doing research with minoritized populations. Santiago noted that we have an ancillary review process to counteract some of these issues. Santiago mentioned issues regarding federal policy changes and disseminating information about those changes to the research community (e.g., changes to the definition of intervention and need for debriefing protocols). This year the College is piloting an ancillary review process.

Bushong asked to add HRPP issues as a future agenda item to note progress.

## **6. Matters arising**

The College will be focusing on research infrastructure support this year (e.g., equipment, state-of-the-art computing facility).

Gasteyer noted it would be helpful to do a new round of unit meetings to discuss research support and resources available to faculty in the College. Santiago mentioned that this information is being disseminated in a number of ways including meetings and newsletters.

Gasteyer also asked about grant management support. The lack of that support in his unit has meant that faculty are doing some of this on their own. It would be helpful to set up trainings to do that kind of management. Santiago indicated that ORSI is providing pre-award support to most units in the College and some post-award support at the request of the unit. She will be working with all Chairs and Directors to discuss this support to individual units.

Brincks asked about creating an archive of our newsletters. Santiago will work on creating this and let the committee know where they are archived.

Lajevardi asked about MSU Advice – was anyone from Social Science awarded one of

these? Santiago indicated that yes we have one participant in this first cohort. This will be a repeated call but probably every other year.

Zhong mentioned that you can see the account number when approving time. She reported the need for training about how to handle student employees and other administrative issues.

Bushong mentioned the need to include a future follow-up item on post award support.

Motion to adjourn by Nazita Lajevardi, seconded by Maite Tapia.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.**