University Research Council
May 20, 2020
3:00 – 4:00 pm via Webex

MINUTES

Attending: *Council Members (voting):* Paul Ahlquist, Tim Donohue, Dorothy Farrar-Edwards, Christopher Kucharik, Miron Livny, Kevin Niemi, Mario Ortiz-Robles, Carol Ryff, Cecilia Stodd, Mary Trotter, Kirsten Wolf. *Council Member (ex officio, voting):* William Karpus. *Council Members (ex officio, non-voting):* Steve Ackerman, Nadine Connor, Cynthia Czajkowski, Brian Fox, Florence Hsia, Kim Moreland, Nora Cate Schaeffer, Petra Schroeder, Amy Wendt. *VCRGE Office:* Kathleen Ruby
Absent: None

1. Welcome and Introductions (Steve Ackerman)

2. Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2020 Meeting (Steve Ackerman)
- The minutes from the previous URC meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Discussion on ramping up research on campus (Steve Ackerman)
- Two documents were given out for review, draft guidance for on-site research activities in phase 1 of the research reboot, and a questionnaire that will be used for researchers applying to return to campus. Steve has been working with the ADs for Research on these, with a goal of getting more research and scholarly activities on campus safely. We need to know who is coming to campus, when they are coming to campus, where they are going to be, and for how long. During phase 1 at least, researchers will be required to complete the questionnaire through an on-line tool and obtain approval from their school/college. We know that going through this process will add some burden, but we are trying to keep it as efficient as possible. Information from the applications will be collected in a database, and reports will be created to coordinate with other campus units. For example, we'll be able to provide some information to the library, so they can expect what might be happening in terms of requests to visit the libraries as we ramp up research. Other units we will need to coordinate with include FP&M and the Police Department. People who can do their research remotely should continue to do that. We also recognize that the decision is best made at the local level, so our office is not approving requests, unless it comes from one of our centers. The ADs for Research are working with the chairs of their departments on developing school/college procedures.

- Miron Livny asked if an application goes from the department to the OVCRGE or to the department, college, and then to the OVCRGE? Steve replied that the answer depends on the school that you're in. For some ADs it worked better one way for some and another way for the other. We are aware that it will cause some confusion. Tim Donohue said there already is confusion, with him for example in WEI, his dean and college is telling them they can do it this way and his other dean and college is telling him they can do it that way. Steve told Tim that if its WEI work to be carried out in the center, do the approval through OVCRGE and follow the OVCRGE path for review and approval; in general the on-site approval should be routed through the unit responsible for the research space.

- Tim commented that the document is great overall and he appreciates all the work that has gone into it; having said that, it mixes research and scholarly activity. He can do scholarly activities at home, but he

cannot mix reagents, grow cells and cultures, and do certain experiments in his garage. If we are going to limit the number of people on campus, he would personally prefer it to be those people who have to be on campus for safety and access to specific research facilities.

He is doing a boatload of scholarly activity at home and everyone that he works with is doing their scholarly work at home. Conflating the two makes it more difficult to clearly identify work that should be approved for on-campus work in Phase 1. Steve replied that in regards to scholarly activities, things that can be done remotely should be done remotely, but some activities are going to require coming to the library; the guidance really says we are not just talking about wet labs, we're talking about music facilities as well. Florence Hsia said both the guidance and the request form have to cover research across all divisions. She added that there are some forms of research that take place that need to have access to campus facilities; in the same way that wet lab people need to be on campus and can't do test tube stuff in their garage, music people cannot do their research in their living room, that's just not possible.

- Steve spoke about the minimum space requirement in the guidance document. In a lab six feet of social distancing means nothing unless you are going to choreograph a dance that everybody's going to do in order to maintain six feet as they go about their work. There's been some work looking at what that square footage should be and we have settled on 400 square feet per person for phase one. As we go through this process, and if things work out and we don't have a flare up of a spread of the virus, we are likely to make that smaller. Tim said you've essentially settled on 799 square feet, because if you have a lab room of that size or less, you're only allowed to have one person in it. He predicts that will get a lot of push back. You are setting, in his opinion, guidelines that are unreal for the average laboratory work to adhere to. He pointed out that CDC guidelines say 113 sq ft. Steve said we may get to that, but initially according to our calculations if we do that, we're going to have 10,000 people on campus. We're trying to limit who comes on campus initially and then if the COVID numbers stay down, allow more. Cindy Czajkowski said the CDC guideline for the six feet is for people walking by each other, not for people sitting and working in a room together. You have to think about not just distance, but duration of time and also mobility. 120 square feet is not the right number at this time. 400 square feet is not a number we are going to be doing forever, part of the reasoning for the number in Phase 1 guidance is to keep density low initially.

- Miron asked if there is a target for the total number of research staff that will be reasonable to have on campus in phase 1? It sounds like 9,000 is too much; what would be a reasonable range? Steve said we're looking at 20-30% of pre-COVID number conditions. Amy Wendt said the estimate for pre-COVID numbers was maybe 12-15,000 researchers. Miron replied so we're talking about bringing back about 2,000? Steve said you can put out a number like that, but it's really going to be varied with each building. Some buildings won't have many people because they can continue to work remotely and others with intensive research would have more requests than can be safely accommodated.

- Amy said one other factor is the rest of campus operations will be severely limited during this time, and not set up to support a full return of research. Steve said one other comment about the 400 sq ft limit in the guidance; there is a statement that we know there will be some instances where that guideline doesn't work in order to get the work done. For example, there may be two people required to run an instrument, and in those cases we're just making sure that they're wearing the right protective gear to reduce the spread of the virus.

- Paul Ahlquist commented that there seems to be a bit of a schizophrenic approach to how PPE is treated in the document. On the one hand there is recognition that PPE is needed in clinical settings, but in that

context there is an implication that PPE should not be used in a regular lab. Then in other places it says in order to get your plan approved you're going to have to show us that you have reasonable PPE, can maintain the supply and have it available to your researchers. Steve said that there are a couple of clarifications so we can make sure we are not overlapping in our understanding. We are differentiating between face coverings and PPE. If you are talking about some sort of method to reduce virus transmission while working on-site, then we are talking about face masks. If protocols for your research require PPE like a surgical mask or gloves, that's defined as PPE and it will have to be ordered centrally. Central campus wants to make sure that they have enough of those items to supply first responders and health officials, so they are going to want to keep more close tabs on who's purchasing PPE than they have in the past. With regards to face coverings and whether or not that's going to be required on campus, the campus thinking has changed frequently so we're going with the recommendation that you follow campus guidelines with regards to face coverings and not stating what those guidelines are within our documents. Campus thinking will continue to evolve, because it brings up the question if you're going to require face coverings who pays for them. Paul asked can they either follow campus or be more stringent if they choose. Steve agreed that is acceptable.

- Kirsten Wolf said she is a little confused because she's unclear whether UW-System policies and requirements apply to UW-Madison. Steve said he thinks our planning is autonomous from UW System's, so we can do things that UW Systems guidelines might not allow. One thing we are saying in our guidance is if you are going to go to another location to do research there and they have guidance as well, then you will have to follow the stricter guidance. For example, if you are going to UW-Platteville and they have a very strict requirement then you need to follow that. If they have a very lenient climate then you will need to follow ours.

- Steve said with this plan we are going to make mistakes, things are going to pop up that we haven't thought of, and we will respond and make modifications as needed as we learn things and as we move along in this process. Paul brought up that there are some details that we might work on refining now or in future stages. For instance, the document says several times that all surfaces should be disinfected between research shifts. He thinks the way it's written, it is vague both inapplicable and unenforceable, because it implies we should hose down the entire laboratory. He is looking for some clarity such as what is considered 'all the surfaces'? We are not going to wash down the floors, but for example, it's important that people disinfect microscope eye pieces. He said he doesn't know how to cross all of these things, but some guidance would be helpful. Another example might be elevators, we'd like to have just one person in an elevator at a time, but how we would accomplish that. Steve brought up that Amy was on a campus wide committee that was looking at some of these issues, so she's also familiar with some of the things that were going on campus-wide. Amy said she had been helping to coordinate with FP&M and Environmental Safety on the guidance that we're giving. The proposal to have one way stairwells turns out to be in conflict with fire safety codes. So as we come up with ideas about guidance, we're trying to work with safety to make sure that we're giving consistent messages. The safety office has put together a guide that is separate from ours on bringing up facilities, and it doesn't get down to the detail of the microscope, but it has some guidance on a building level beyond what we have in our document, and they are continuing to produce guidance. It's a work in progress all over campus and those documents are going to be posted on FP&M's website, but they are not ready for primetime yet.

- Kristin is wondering how on earth do we handle books. Steve said he has had conversations with Florence and Lisa Carter. Lisa is struggling with this as well. One of the questions we have on the form is are you going to be going to the library or need to get to the library? We're collecting that data to give to her so she can look and see what are people are planning to collect; some of that information that will help her figure out how to move forward.

- Tim said he would like to make a formal request that before we release any document, we take advantage of the expertise we have on campus with infectious disease physicians and get them to vet the guidelines. Steve said yes, I think that is a good suggestion. Paul suggested Dr. Ryan Westergard (Department of Medicine, also the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Communicable Disease Officer for the State of Wisconsin) and Nasia Safdar (Department of Medicine and Medical Director of Infection Control at UW Hospital and Clinics).

- Steve asked everyone how much pushback they thought we're going to get. Tim responded a very, very lot. The 400 square feet or one person per 799 square feet, you are going to get a lot of pushback. It needs to be defendable. Christopher Kucharik offered his experience so far being department chair in agronomy within CALS. They are trying to get their faculty to control the things that they can control and to buy into campus guidelines as they come out. They've looked at schedules for the buildings that they occupy, staggering staff on even-odd days, even hours, limited hours. He said he thinks a lot of responsibility is going to be put on the department chairs or the director of the research centers to plan this out. Chris said he and the Associate Dean for Research didn't approve every plan submitted initially. People scaled way back, they had to understand this is not a business as usual situation and they need to remember that there's a global pandemic going on. Steve said just to follow up, one of his fears as we open and ramp this up is that we have to remember as we do this that we are also trying to change faculty behavior. He worries a little bit that once they get back on campus they're going to think okay, I'm back on campus, here we go, because we're seeing that right from the public in general. Tim said if you want me to know who, when, where, and how long; and you want me to ask everyone of the 12 people in the group that my lab floor occupies, you are setting him up for failure. There will be some people who say that they can't guarantee that they only need to be there from 12-2 because their experiment doesn't run on that kind of schedule, but they will know that there is only going to be so many people in that footprint. Tim said you also don't want him on campus because he's over 60. Steve said to Tim that he raises an interesting point that he hadn't really thought of, and this is with regard to being on campus to conduct an experiment, you're going to need a contingency time in case something goes wrong. So that will have to be planned out as well. Miron wondered should we provide some tools to kind of make monitoring easier on Tim, so that people can check in and out so Tim doesn't have to fill it out. Steve mentioned that Physics has developed a really nice scheduling tool. You might reach out to them and ask them if you can take a look at it or if they can share it.

- Tim said the guidance document makes directors and department chairs responsible for new things they have not had to manage in the past. Christopher wanted to add that some concern that we have is, we have to have some knowledge of who's been in contact with whom. Christopher asked that if a case does happen, will they shut down the whole campus, or will it be a department or a wing of a building or will it be limited to a lab? If we have better documentation of who has been where, maybe it improves our chances of not shutting the whole operation down. Steve said that's one of the reasons why we want to collect this information at a campus level. When they go on to fill out the form, it's not just about the PI coming onto campus, but who else is coming to campus. So that if something does come up, we have a database that's sitting somewhere that could help with the tracing.

- Miron said you're going to have information about what is planned, this person will be here for 2 hours, this person will be here for 3 hours, but are you going to monitor what actually happens? If an experiment runs late and person A tells person B don't come to the lab because I'm still here for another hour because I have to finish the experiment, it seems you are better off having a token for being at the lab and this is to be exchanged because they are uncertainties about the schedule. Steve said that is a

good question, but not something we can enforce at our level. He thinks it really falls into the department level and how their plans work in order to deal with those kinds of contingencies.

- Amy said the functions that she sees in terms of the entries in the form are getting this data at the campus level, but to some degree they're meant to be estimates to make sure people are thinking about the scheduling and also to provide some guidance to FP&M because they will be operating with limited staff. They want to know where people are going to be, what buildings they're going to be in, and what part of the buildings they are going to be in, so the staff that are available can focus their cleaning on the locations that need it. Kirsten said from what she understands from Ray Cross is that all campuses will have an app that will be provided which we have to have in our smart phones to do tracking and tracing; and that will be imposed and demanded of all of us in the Fall.

- Steve explained that he and Bill Karpus have tagged a group to look at what might be happening or ideas for dealing with graduate education in the fall. In some regard, he also wants to look at what we do in the summer as a way to get ready for that and to learn some lessons of what worked or didn't work so well.

- Tim said maybe he missed it, but the document talks about if you're symptomatic, stay home, go get a test. It doesn't say if you test positive, though shalt inform somebody. Is that because of HIPPA or because I missed it or it is not in the document, and who would that person be? Steve said I think we have sidestepped the question or required reporting because of HIPPA type conditions. Tim said he's seen it on other campus documents. Cindy indicated we don't have a precise answer to that because right now we're not doing our own testing on campus. She thinks we could legally ask all employees to report positive reports to a confidential unit person, who would probably be in UHS. Moreover, UHS and OHR are managing positive reports now and providing campus guidelines that are legal. If and when we get our own testing, then obviously we'll know who those people are. Steve told Cindy that we should work that into our document. Steve then brought up that there is a working group looking at testing and how to accomplish that on campus; Norman Drinkwater has been pulled out of retirement to lead this working group, and Cindy and Petra are on it. The report from this group is due on June 1st, so more information will be forthcoming.

4. Updates (Steve Ackerman)
- The UAPC meeting is tomorrow. They will be considering our request to rename LCMB to the Center for Quantitative Cell Imaging; as well as our request to close the Biotron. We will let everyone know the outcome on these two items.

- We will also direct you to a web page that deals with the research professor titles. They have been approved, along with the teaching titles.

- This committee does not normally meet in the summer, but Steve may ask everyone to get together at some point after we're into Phase 1 for a while; particularly if campus starts to put metrics on what we need to do to get to Phase 2.

5. Other Business