

WEST VIRGINIA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL

June 28, 2018

A meeting of the West Virginia Science and Research Council was held on June 28, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. at the headquarters of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. Attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Paul Hill
Dr. Jan Taylor
Dr. Fred King via phone
Dr. Charles Somerville
Jack Carpenter
Dr. Earl Scime via phone
Dr. Laura Gibson via phone
Anne Barth

OTHERS

Annette Carpenter
Angela Sundstrom
Dr. Brandi Ettehadih
Dr. J. Ulises Toledo
Dr. Maura McLaughlin via Skype

CALL TO ORDER

After declaring a quorum was present, Dr. Hill called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes from the prior meetings held on July 28, 2017 and October 11, 2017 was requested; motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT Presented by Jan Taylor

New staff members Dr. Brandi Ettehadih, Education, Outreach and Diversity manager and Angela Sundstrom, Communications manager were introduced to the Council.

Federal Programs:

NSF RII Track 1

- The NSF RII Track 1 annual report to NSF was submitted on May 1 but has not been approved; Dr. Taylor expects approval in August.
- West Virginia EPSCoR has a new NSF program officer.
- Jack Carpenter asked if changing a milestone is typical. Dr. Taylor stated that yes it is very common. The goals and objectives stay the same but the activities can change.
- NSF EPSCoR staff will be at WVU for our site visit September 18-19; a draft agenda can be found in the Council's meeting materials on page 86 but the final agenda is due to NSF tomorrow, June 29. Dr. Charles Somerville will be sending photos to Dr. Taylor later today related to the day 2 agenda; Dr. Sheena Murphy will be providing details related to the facilities tour. A meeting of the External Review Advisory Board will take place in Charleston in advance of the site visit.
- Jack Carpenter inquired about the spending rate of the RII Track 1 grant. Annette Carpenter reported that according to the annual report appendices completed by each partner, the spending rate was on target. A copy of the grant drawdown report from research.gov was not available despite requests made to HEPC's accounting staff.
- Dr. Taylor asked for approval of the call for white papers for the next Track 1 proposal (due to NSF next summer). Multi papers can be accepted from each institution; Dr. Taylor will ask our program officer if continuation of the current projects will be allowed. A motion to approve the white paper was requested; motion carried.

State Programs:

- The new STEM fellows grants were issued on September 1 and the new Research Challenge Grants were issued in January. Press releases for both can be found in the meeting materials.
- The Research Challenge Fund spending plan for FY '19 was presented. The fund lost nearly \$300k this year and is less than half of what it was when it was originally started. Because of the continued uncertainty and outlying multiyear grant awards, Dr. Taylor suggested that we continue to be cautious and keep a residual balance on hand each year. The Research Challenge grants (RCG) will be the hardest to maintain if further cuts are made. Dr. Hill stated that we could request a line item in the HPEC budget. Dr. Gibson stated that Dr. Damron will be a great advocate for the funds since being awarded one of the RCGs. Angela Sundstrom indicated that she will contact Dr. Damron regarding a commentary for the Neuron. A motion to approve the spending plan was requested; motion carried. Dr. Hill indicated that the spending plan would be added the next Commission meeting agenda.
- Annette Carpenter presented a summary of grants that the Division of Science and Research currently administers. The summary was intended to be sent to the Governor's office for review but Dr. Hill indicated that the HEPC staff has sent a letter to explain HEPC's grant process and is waiting for a reply. The new process could potentially slow down the grant awarding process currently in place.
- The annual Trust Fund Report was presented to group.

REPORTS FROM TECHNCIAL LEADERS-

- Dr. Maura McLaughlin gave a report to the group on the progress of the Gravitational Waves portion of the NSF RII Track 1 project via Skype.
- Dr. Charles Somerville reported on the Appalachian Freshwater Initiative portion of the NSF RII Track 1 project.
- Dr. Majid Jaridi did not attend the meeting and a report on the NASA EPSCoR project was not given.

OTHER

- Anne Barth suggested an article in the Neuron regarding the upcoming water conference in September; the contact is Jason Hubbart.
- Jack Carpenter asked about the life after RII Track 1 grant. Dr. Somerville indicated that MU will rely on diversification to finish the project; he does not anticipate finding a single source of funds but will look for smaller grants from NSF, NASA, and maybe NIH for clinicals related to health. Dr. Toledo stated that WVU will seek funds from USDA. WVU has collaborations with water-shed groups and other private foundations.
- Dr. Taylor informed the group about the newest Scientist Spotlight video featuring Nicolas Zegre, the new look of the division of Science and Research's website, the production of a quarterly e-newsletter relating to the RII track 1 projects and the upcoming Neurite magazine editions. She also educated the group on the last 3 Neurons and the process used to determine the feature cover story.
- An announcement was made about the next STEM speaker series featuring Nina Tandon in July and Talithia Williams October.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in November with the need to approve the NSF RII Track 1 white paper submissions and to receive year 1 RCG reports.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.