

WEST VIRGINIA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL

March 21, 2022

A meeting of the West Virginia Science and Research Council was held on March 21, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Higher Education Policy Commission in Charleston WV and via Zoom. Attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chancellor Sarah Tucker
Dr. J. Ulises Toledo
Dr. Uma Sundarum
Dr. Juliana Serafin
Anne Barth
Erika Klose for Superintendent Clayton Burch
Kelsey Staggers for Secretary Ed Gaunch
Dr. Sally Hodder
Dr. Mike Norton
Dr. John Maher

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dr. Fred King
Dr. Colleen Nolan
Dr. Maura McLaughlin
Dr. Jack Dever
Rachel Roberts

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Annette Carpenter (HEPC)
Angela Sundstrom (HEPC)
Dr. Ami Smith (WVSU)
Dr. Suzanne Strait (HEPC)
Dr. Sheena Murphy (WVU)
Ryan Quinn (WV Gazette-Mail)

CALL TO ORDER

After declaring a quorum was present, Dr. Tucker called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting on October 18, 2021, was made by Anne Barth and seconded by Dr. Ulises Toledo; the motion carried.

RII TRACK 1 PROPOSAL (Juliana Serafin & Suzanne Strait)

Dr. Serafin announced that the NSF EPSCoR RII Track 1 proposal that was submitted in August 2021 was declined. The average reviewer score was 3.5 (medium). A meeting of the proposal's PI and CoPIs will take place next week. There are several options for discussion, including revising the same proposal, rescoping the proposal or submitting a proposal with a new topic in either August 2022 or 2023. The reviewers liked the proposal topic, but the weakness was due to a lack of expertise in electron microscopy and clarity about data science which were viewed as high-risk. Demonstration of data collection techniques and data analysis would be needed if the proposal is to be resubmitted. Dr. Serafin recommended that the Council make a decision on the next step after the PI and co-PIs have a chance to meet and discuss options. A motion to apply for a no cost extension and supplemental funding to the existing RII Track 1 was made by Dr. Sundaram and seconded by Dr. Toledo; the motion carried. The supplement is to keep the ESPCoR office and staff operational.

RESEARCH CHALLENGE GRANTS (Juliana Serafin & Suzanne Strait)

Dr. Serafin gave a brief overview of the Research Challenge Grant program. The current awards are in the 5th and final year and therefore, a new competition will be underway soon. Dr. Strait reported that a new Request for Proposals is expected in April. The goal is for the funded projects to be viable candidates for EPSCoR RII Track-1 funding and to align with the State Science & Technology Plan. Dr. Maher requested that we consider looking at the RII Track-2 grants also. Drs. Serafin and Strait agreed to consider such.

RESEARCH CHALLENGE FUND (RCF) (Juliana Serafin)

In order to be successful, more financial support for the Research Challenge Grants, along with the other grants funded by the RCF Fund is needed. Dr. Serafin shared a copy of a flyer that she developed and hopes to circulate to the key stakeholders soon. Dr. Toledo suggested that she make sure that all know that the Research Challenge Grants align with the Statewide Technology Plan. Another suggestion was to put the return on investment at the top of the flyer. Dr. Serafin agreed to both suggestions.

NSF EPSCoR/NIH IDeA Flyer (Juliana Serafin)

A 2nd flyer summarizing the success and accomplishments of the West Virginia EPSCoR and IDeA projects was presented to the group. Dr. Serafin explained that it was used for meetings with Congressional offices and other stakeholders. Dr. Hodder noted that there is only one CTR award and that the others listed on the flyer are supplements rather than separate awards. Drs. Sundaram and Toledo also made some suggestions. Dr. Serafin requested that all clarifications and suggestions be sent to her via email.

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE (Angela Sundstrom, Suzanne Strait, Jade Irving)

Dr. Strait updated the group on the next 2 STEM speakers. Dr. Raven Baxter is expected to speak at Marshall University April 11 at 7 pm and a 2nd speaker scheduled for Charleston in June during Festival. Both events are in person. Dr. Strait also recapped the success of Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol held February 18th, and she announced upcoming STEM summer camps.

Ms. Irving gave a brief update on the First2 project funded by an NSF INCLUDES grant. The alliance is working on a long-term sustainability plan for after the grant from NSF expires in August 2023.

Ms. Sundstrom reported that the next *Neuron* will focus on the current Research Challenge Grants and will be released in May. The *Neuron* is also changing from quarterly editions to semi-annual editions. The next round of Science Spotlight videos are also underway but the featured individuals have not been confirmed yet. Dr. Tucker provided a suggestion to Ms. Sundstrom regarding NUCOR which is starting operation in WV and recycles steel. Ms. Sundstrom will follow up on this.

NEXT MEETING

A date for the next meeting was not chosen.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:47 p.m.