

## **WEST VIRGINIA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL**

### **June 14, 2022**

A meeting of the West Virginia Science and Research Council was held on June 14, 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:**

Dr. Fred King  
Dr. J. Ulises Toledo  
Rachel Roberts  
Dr. Juliana Serafin  
Anne Barth  
Dr. Maura McLaughlin  
Kelsey Staggers for Secretary Ed Gaunch  
Dr. Sally Hodder  
Dr. Mike Norton  
Dr. John Maher

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dr. Uma Sundarum  
Dr. Colleen Nolan  
Chancellor Sarah Tucker  
Dr. Jack Dever  
Superintendent Clayton Burch

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Annette Carpenter (HEPC)  
Angela Sundstrom (HEPC)  
Jade Irving (HEPC)  
Dr. Suzanne Strait (HEPC)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

After declaring a quorum was present, Anne Barth called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Dr. Juliana Serafin noted that Dr. Colleen Nolan's and Dr. Michael Norton's terms expire on June 30, 2022. Dr. Nolan has served 2 terms and is no longer eligible for a reappointment; Dr. Norton's term can be extended. Dr. Serafin will work with the provost at Marshall University and the Governor's office on seeking replacements and renewals.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting on March 21, 2022 was made by Dr. Fred King and seconded by Dr. John Maher; the motion carried.

### **RII TRACK 1 PROPOSAL** (Juliana Serafin & Suzanne Strait)

Dr. Juliana Serafin reminded all that the NSF EPSCoR RII Track 1 proposal that was submitted in August 2021 was declined. 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. Dr. Serafin referred to the 2-page overview (labeled as confidential) of a new proposal that is underway. The neuroscience and education/workforce development portions of the proposal from last year will remain nearly the same but the Connectomics research was dropped and will be replaced with Transcriptomics. Both The Implementation Group (TIG) and ScienceDocs Inc., will provide external evaluation as the proposal develops. A motion to proceed with the letter of intent due on July 19 was made by Dr. John Maher and seconded by Dr. Fred King; the motion carried (Dr. Serafin did not vote).

Dr. Serafin announced that the NSF provided another financial supplement to keep the ESPCoR office and staff operational through July 31, 2023.

### **FY '23 Spending Plan** (Juliana Serafin)

Per the last meeting, in order to be successful, more financial support or additional funding to State's Research Challenge Fund (RCF) is needed. Dr. Serafin shared a copy of the proposed spending plan of the RCF for FY '23. Although the fund currently has a cash balance, most of the funds are earmarked for projects that have already been awarded. The anticipated income for FY '23 leaves no room for any new projects or cost share. A question related to Technical Assistance was asked and Dr. Serafin explained that this is a serviceopen to all

institutions of higher education to seek proposal review services through TIG. Anyone that needs a proposal reviewed should contact the STaR Division. . A motion to approve the spending plan was made by Dr. Ulises Toledo and seconded by Dr. Sally Hodder; motion carried.

### **RESEARCH CHALLENGE FUND GRANTS** (Suzanne Strait)

Dr. Suzanne Strait gave a brief overview of the Research Challenge Grant program. The current awards are in the 5<sup>th</sup> and final year and therefore, a new competition is now underway. Dr. Strait reported that the Request for Proposals was fine-tuned to include topics more in line with the NSF EPSCoR Track 1 and Track 2 programs and the statewide strategic S&T plan. The proposals will be externally reviewed by TIG and final proposals will be chosen by this Council later this year. Dr. Strait also announced that the Opportunity Grant program for FY '23 will open on July 1. This program is first come/first served and is targeted for projects like camps, conferences and faculty travel and is partially supported by the HEPC's Initiative Project Fund.

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

Dr. Strait updated the group on the last STEM speaker, Dr. Raven Baxter, who came to Marshall University in April. She indicated that the change in venue attracted a different audience and was deemed successful with approximately 118 folks in attendance. The next speaker, Mr. Carl Zimmer, is tonight in Charleston at the newly renovated Kanawha County Public Library. Dr. Strait also updated the group on the STEM summer camps announced at the last meeting of the Council. She is hopeful that the program will grow by adding a new county each year.

As previously stated, Angela Sundstrom reported that the newest *Neuron* will focus on the current Research Challenge Grants. The draft is being completed today and will be posted online tomorrow with print copies expected in the next 2-3 weeks. The next round of Science Spotlight videos is still in the works. Angela plans to have 3 videos completed (with a focus on academia, government and industry) in July.

Ms. Irving gave a brief update on the First2 project funded by an NSF INCLUDES grant. A semi-annual conference was held in May and included industry engagement which enabled the students in attendance to share their resumes. The summer research experiences will start in July. The First2 alliance continues to work on a long-term sustainability plan as the grant from NSF expires in August 2023.

### **NEXT MEETING / OTHER**

A date for the next meeting was not chosen. Dr. Fred King made a motion to allow Dr. Juliana Serafin to proceed with the NSF EPSCoR RII Track 1 proposal submission in August without the need for another Council meeting. Dr. John Maher seconded; the motion passed (Dr. Serafin did not vote).

Dr. J. Ulises Toledo resigned as a Council member due to his new job duties in the state of Louisiana. Once Dr. Toledo sends his resignation letter, Dr. Serafin will seek a replacement from the Governor's Office.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.