Council of Principal Investigators (CPI)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2022, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., Microsoft Teams

Members in attendance:	Gregory Collins, Charles France, Bess Frost, Randolph Glickman, Asma Khan, Jun Hee Kim (Lynette Daws alternate), David Libich, Daniel Lodge, Darpan Patel, Susan Weintraub
Members Absent:	Armen Akopian, Lynette Daws, Katherine Dondanville, Susannah Nicholson, Adam Salmon, Mark Shapiro
Guest:	Babatunde Oyajobi, Ph.D., Director, Office of Post-Doctoral Affairs (OPA)

Dr. Oyajobi met with the CPI to provide updates on policies of the Office of Post-doctoral Affairs (OPA) along with an outline of progress to date and what remains to be done. The meeting was opened by Dr. Lodge who turned the meeting over to Dr. Oyajobi.

1. **OPA Updates**
- Dr. Oyajobi gave introductory comments about the current status of the OPA, explaining that the primary role of the OPA is to insure the wellbeing of postdoctoral (PD) fellows.
- He noted that there had been a change in VPR leadership so that he now reports to Dr. Potter. He added that there are multiple administrative layers that often slow down progress.
- He then gave a PowerPoint with following information:
  o There are currently 148 postdoctoral fellows
    ▪ Male, 69 male; female, 79
    ▪ domestic, 56; international, 92
    ▪ underrepresented minority (URM), 25; non-URM, 123 (as of March 1, 2022)
  o There are seven departments with PD fellows, with 65-68% in basic science departments.
  o Due to COVID, starting in May 2020, all OPA programs were presented virtually. They are gradually returning to in-person format.
  o The OPA offers the following programs
    ▪ New Postdoc Orientation (NPO) – quarterly
    ▪ Rigor and Reproducibility (R&R) – bi-annually
    ▪ Spotlight on Research Integrity (SRI) – monthly
    ▪ Pathways to Careers in Science (PCS) – annually
    ▪ San Antonio Postdoctoral Research Forum
    ▪ F-Troop! and Primer – tri-annually
    ▪ Entering Mentoring – tri-annually
    ▪ Support for the UTHSA Postdoc Association

- Dr. Oyajobi reported that the OPA will be given an additional FTE for a masters- or Ph.D.-level program manager. This person will be responsible for development of new initiatives, such as a PD recruitment weekend, career exploration workshops,

CV/resume review, travel resources, listserv of funding for educational and networking opportunities, English classes (for spouses of international PDs).

- The OPA will continue to recognize an outstanding PD Mentor(s) of the Year. Dr. Oyajobi listed the winners of the past three years (James Stockand, 2019; Phil LoVerde, 2020, and Lynette Daws and Patrick Sung, 2021). A faculty committee is in place to review nominations for this award.
- Work-in-progress in the OPA
  - ⊖ Update Institutional Postdoc Policy on English Language Proficiency (ELP)
  - o Evaluate the English Language Proficiency (ELP) requirement for PDs from non-English speaking countries
    - Suspension of the English3 proficiency test for 90 days, effective January 7, 2022
    - Working group is reviewing ELP and will submit its recommendation to the VPR; the goal will be to revise the HOP
    - In the interim, exceptions can be requested and will involve virtual interviews with adjudication by the Advisory Committee (Vice-Deans for Research)
  - o Duration of training (HOP 4.3.12, Sec IV B[3]):
    - It was previously decided that there should be a five-year aggregate maximum for PD training at the HSC
    - The limit has been temporarily extended to six years
    - Dr. Oyajobi summarized data from the National Postdoc Association and from other institutions that indicated that a five-year limit at UTHSA is arbitrary and deserves reconsideration.
    - Discussion ensued about managing longer-term fellows by the creation of a new PD appointment, e.g., a Senior Postdoc Fellow. This would not require HR involvement.
  - o OPA Website: The OPA is working with IMS to update and redesign the website.
  - o Activities
    - PD appreciation lunch gave Dr. Oyajobi and Dr. Potter the opportunity to meet PD in person—for the first time in many cases.
    - Research trainee social (including both graduate students and PDs)
    - Dr. Oyajobi is working with the Graduate School Dean to plan events/activities for trainees, similar to the January event focusing health and wellness.
- Discussion following Dr. Oyajobi's presentation
  - o Dr. Frost asked if the listserv for postdoc funding could be incorporated into the funding opportunities emailed to faculty. Dr. Oyajobi replied that this can be done to alert both the PD and their faculty mentor.
  - o Dr. Frost then asked if the formal ELP requirement could be eliminated and be satisfied by a simple attestation of fluency. Dr. Oyajobi agreed with this concept and will see if it's possible to formalize the process.
  - o Dr. Libich agreed with the changes proposed to the ELP. He also requested that citizenship requirements be included in the listserv announcements of funding opportunities.
  - o Dr. Libich indicated that he has reservations about creating new titles for senior PDs, because that could impact their eligibility for certain grants. Dr, Oyajobi acknowledged this could be an issue, but the primary reason for considering the Senior Postdoc position is to allow a longer duration for training without involving HR.

- Dr. Lodge noted that five years is too short a limit for a PD program; it is arbitrary and should be more flexible. But, he also thought that five years as a junior PD plus three years as a senior PD could be workable. Dr. Oyajobi acknowledged the benefits of the proposed plan and will evaluate feasibility.
  - Dr. France noted that there had been disagreement about the five-year limit when originally proposed but it was implemented despite this opposition. He also questioned the utility of a PD recruitment event because PDs do not select mentors in this way. Dr. Oyajobi replied that the event would not change that process, it would be a supplementary way of connecting PD applicants and mentors.
  - Dr. France recommended that a letter of congratulations signed by both the President and Dr. Oyajobi be sent to trainees who secure extramural funding. Dr. Oyajobi reported that the OPA has been considering various ways to acknowledge PDs who secure funding, including a letter, award, or possibly a stipend supplement.
- Dr. Lodge thanked Dr. Oyajobi for meeting with the CPI and for doing a spectacular job with the OPA. Dr. Oyajobi said that he looks forward to meeting again with the CPI to report progress and discuss concerns.

Dr. Oyajobi left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

2. **CPI Business**
- The February meeting minutes were approved with one minor correction.
- Dr. Frost, the CPI Communications Officer reported that little feedback has been received from the Chairs.

3. **New business**
- Problems are still being experienced with the new travel policy:
  - Delays of 7-10 days in finalizing travel arrangements have resulted in higher airline costs.
  - Multiple other issues were reported.
  - Dr. Lodge proposed that a CPI working group contact Ginny Gomez-Leon to discuss these problems and work to resolve them.
  - Dr. France suggested including admin support personnel who also have had issues with the new travel process.
  - Dr. Weintraub said many of the MOST travel partners have little or no experience with arranging business travel.
- Spam filter. Dr. Libich reported that the spam filter has been updated and is working better, but he still thinks a user should have the option to disable it.
- April CPI meeting. Dr. Potter will discuss the Council of Scholars and how to integrate basic and clinical investigators.
- Dr. Schmelz will be the invited guest for the May CPI meeting to discuss the NIH data management sharing policy and electronic lab books.
- Dr. France suggested inviting Yeman Collier to meet with the CPI to address issues with email filtering and the institutional website.
- Dr. Weintraub advised the Council that a software system is being tested that will prompt users to label files that are sensitive, contain PHI or other proprietary information in response to requirements from UT System. IMS is seeking input from users before finalizing the system. She noted that there are benefits to having such a system in place, such as getting approval for additional mechanisms for cloud data storage. There is currently no timetable for implementation.

- No new business was discussed, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.