**Council of Principal Investigators (CPI)**

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, October 20, 2022

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., Microsoft Teams

Members in attendance: Jean Bopassa, Gregory Collins, Lynette Daws, Katherine Dondanville, Asma Khan, David Libich, Daniel Lodge, Georgia McCann, Susannah Nicholson, Marzieh Salehi, Casey Straud, Susan Weintraub, Tara Karns-Wright

Members Absent: Armen Akopian, and Darpan Patel

Guests: Phil LoVerde, Ph.D. (Professor, Biochemistry & Structural Biology

David Weiss, Ph.D. (Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences)

Michael Berton, Ph.D. (Director, IBMS)

**Faculty Mentoring Academy (Dr. Phil LoVerde)**

Dr. Phil LoVerde described establishment of a new Faculty Mentoring Academy that is a collaboration between the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS), the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and the Office of the Vice President for Research. He noted that mentors fill an important role for graduate students, junior faculty and senior faculty. As part of the Academy, a website has been developed that provides mentoring resources, including information about what makes a good mentor, how postdocs can mentor graduate students, how others in the lab can be mentored. Research shows that students who have mentoring relationships have higher productivity levels, publish more papers, have higher levels of involvement with their departments and greater satisfaction with their programs. Workshops are to be held for small groups (10-12 people), starting in February 2023. Dr. Libich asked about plans for additional dissemination. Dr. LoVerde replied that he will send the URL for the Academy website to David for distribution to the CPI membership. He will also enlist the assistance of a variety of administrative groups and to get support for the Academy. Dr. David Weiss has obtained a supplement from a GSBS training grant to develop the website. Other funding sources are also available. Dr. LoVerde noted that he attended a workshop at the University of Wisconsin and will also use information (as permitted) from other programs such as the University of Michigan and the University of North Carolina. Initial members of the Academy include six faculty who have been recognized by postdocs and graduate students as mentors of the year. A mechanism will be developed to appoint others to the Academy. On the recent CTSA renewal, the Academy was included as a mentoring component. The Academy is valued as a mentoring component for training grants. NIH has freely-available material (videos and articles) to promote good mentoring practices and develop mentoring skills. Dr. LoVerde reported that next week there will be a roundtable discussion and a seminar about mentoring burnout: Dr. Ruth Gotian, Ed.D., “Don’t Let Mentoring Burn You Out,” Monday, October 24, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. in ALTC 302.

**Proposed Graduate Student Stipend Increases/FY23 (Dr. David Weiss)**

Dr. David Weiss and Dr. Michael Berton reported on a proposed increase of graduate student stipends. Dr. Berton noted students and members of the IBMS student council had expressed concerns that their stipends were not meeting their financial needs, in particular because rent in San Antonio has increased markedly over the past year. In response to a July GSBS survey, out of 58 IBMS faculty responses, 52 agreed for need of a stipend increase. Dr. Berton reviewed current graduate student stipends at comparable/competitive institutions and found that in 16 different programs, the average stipend is $32,538 ($30K - $37K); the average in Texas programs is $33.7K. The basic science chairs overwhelmingly support of a stipend increase. Based on available information, Dr. Berton recommended a $5K increase to $35K. Dr. Weiss noted the the last time there was a stipend increase, a message was sent to all the faculty who had students to find out if they could cover an increase or if help would be needed. For the last increase, 11 PIs received assistance for one year ($4,000 split 50/50 between the GSBS and departments) Natalina Martinez (GSBS Director, Finance and Administration) has contacted numerous departments to gauge the burden or gap of funding that be caused for PIs by a new stipend increase. Dr. Weiss indicated that the GSBS would do everything they can to find resources to help. Dr. Lodge reported that many need assistance due to tight budgets. Dr. Libich expressed concern that extra slots in the incoming graduate student class that have finally been approved might not be sustainable if there is a stipend increase. Dr. Weiss noted the institution receives 12% in formula funding per student. Dr. Berton added that PIs also have to cover the cost for insurance is approximately $3,500 per student per year. Discussion ensued about various aspects and consequences of an increase in graduate student stipends.

**CPI Business**

* The August CPI minutes were approved. The September minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.
* CPI Executive Committee. Katie Dondanville was elected as Vice Chair and Tara Wright was elected as Communications Chair.
* Research Compliance Subcommittee. Dr. Libich emphasized the importance of CPI representation on this committee. Currently, the policy for visiting scientists is being discussed. Dr. Libich noted that the meeting conflicts with the Graduate Admission Committee meeting that he attends and asked for a volunteer to replace him. Tara Karns-Wright agreed to attend.
* NIH Data Management and Sharing Working Group. Dr. Libich and Dr. Collins have been participating on this workgroup that is important because of future requirements for a data management and sharing plan on NIH grant applications submitted after January 2023. Dr. Libich asked for a volunteer for the workgroup and Dr. Weintraub agreed to attend the meetings.
* CPI Executive Committee meeting of Dr. Libich and Dr. Lodge with Dr. Jennifer Potter, Andrea Marks and Yeman Collier. Topics covered included: 1) computer replacement policy to address the necessity of upgrading Windows computers to Windows 11 by 2025; 2) institutional software licenses and problems caused by not making the discounted rates available for students; 3) the NIH Data Management and Sharing Working Group; 4) the need for journal open-access publishing agreements across the UT System; 5) the lack of cost-of-living adjustments for faculty salaries; 6) problems with official business parking on the North campus.
* Agenda for the November CPI meeting. Drs. Meredith Zozus and Kimberly Summers will report on the activities of the NIH Data Management and Sharing Workgroup.

No additional new business was introduced, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.