Research Council Meeting

October 15, 2026 via Zoom

Attendees: Aime Levesque, Bob Kennedy, Bryan Franks, Cameron Wake, Derek Molliver, Jamie Vaughn, Julie Peterson, Karen Houseknecht, Kim Bedard, Lisa Herschbach, Matt Havrda, Michele Polacsek, Russ Ferland, Nick Gere, Scott Wood.

Absentees: Amy Deveau, Ian Meng, Markus Frederich, Mohamed ElSalhy, Sonya Durney, Susan McHugh, Ursula Roese.

UFA R&S Representative: Kiernan Gordon,

Updates **VPR Houseknecht**

VPR Houseknecht outlined recent organizational changes approved by senior leadership, including the creation of new offices for Human Protections and Biosafety (led by Bob Kennedy) and Animal Welfare (led by Jamie Vaughn), along with plans to hire a Senior Director for Research Integrity and Compliance to address staffing gaps.
Continues:

- Recruiting Sr Director Research Integrity & Compliance
- Recruiting Research Compliance Training Manager
- Announce the new IACUC chair soon.
- Continue recruiting for a backup attending veterinarian.
- Karen/Bob: Recruit faculty and professional staff to serve on the new Institutional Review Entity (IRE) oversight board.

Director, Human Protections & Biosafety Kennedy detailed two new federal policies impacting biosafety oversight: the finalized Federal Stopping Policy for high-risk life sciences research, which must be implemented by January 16, 2027, and a draft NIH biosafety policy currently under public review. The stopping policy requires institutions to screen all life sciences research for potential dangerous gain-of-function risks and international collaborations of concern, necessitating the establishment of a new Institutional Review Entity (IRE) compliance committee. Multiple participants asked questions about specific research areas, including kelp research, lentiviral vectors, and commercially purchased plasmids, with Bob clarifying that current guidance is limited and institutions are waiting for federal agency guidance expected in November.

Bob

- Finalize and share drafts of the Life Sciences Research Screening Questionnaire and PI attestation form for feedback.
- Develop additional forms and establish a workflow for the federal stopping policy implementation.
- Begin drafting the policy for the federal stopping policy, to be adjusted after federal guidance is released in November.

AD COM Havrda

Provided updates on the upcoming forum on the 30th, featuring Samantha House as keynote speaker, and announced the hiring of Ava Emery as a research assistant for post-award administrative tasks.

ORI Calls:

- Fill out the IT needs survey from Karen's office and encourage colleagues to do so before the budget process begins.
- Inform purchasing staff about the new finance office policy prohibiting IT-related purchases and renewals on P-cards.
- Security should be contacted first for acute facilities issues, followed by notifications to colleagues and facilities teams.

Presentation:

Research Integrity and Compliance, new org (link to presentation) **Karen Houseknecht**
Bob Kennedy