UH Research Advisory Board
2nd Meeting – January 22, 2014
Summary

Members in attendance:
Roger Lukas (Chair), Dave Duffy (Vice-Chair), Juanita Andaya, Tom Schroeder, Magdy Iskander, JoAnn Yuen, William Haning (telecom)

Members unable to participate:
Robert McLaren, Harold Masumoto, Matthew Platz, Wendy Kuntz

Also attending
Vassilis Syrmos, UH VP for Research and Innovation
Kellie Terada, committee support staff

The Chair asked for final feedback on the draft summary from the initial meeting held in early November. It was agreed to post meeting summaries on the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation website, and to communicate the existence of the Research Advisory Board (RAB) to the research community through the UHARI mail listserv.

As discussed at the initial meeting of the RAB with VP Syrmos, the first task of the RAB is to implement a recommendation by the UHARI Executive Committee of October, 2011 to then-UH-president Greenwood. This called for previous reports on UH research to be reviewed to determine the status of implementing their recommendations. The overarching goal is to provide advice to the VPRI regarding previous recommendations that still need to be addressed to enable progress towards implementation of the Hawaii Innovation Initiative (HII).

Spreadsheets were constructed by K. Terada with recommendations (for improving the UH research enterprise) that were extracted from the Raleigh Research Task Force (2001), the Forrester research report to the Manoa Chancellor (2001), and the Hashimoto research administration committee report (2004). These were distributed to the RAB members by e-mail in December.

Subsequently, spreadsheet columns were added that indicate assessment by the RAB of the current situation with respect to each recommendation [NOTE: These were populated by the Chair with modest input from the RAB members.] If a recommendation was deemed substantially implemented, it was consider "done", though not implying that further improvements are not still needed. An example is the Kuali/MyGrant electronic research administration system.

Recommendations considered to be "not done" were assigned to three broad categories - "straightforward", "complex", and "major challenge" -- according to the perceived difficulty of implementation. Hard copies of the enhanced spreadsheet was provided at the meeting, along with listings of recommendations in the "done" and "straightforward" categories.
The overall feeling of the group at the meeting is that much has been accomplished since the research reports had been released. Some tasks need to be refreshed, and some might be simply deleted if not relevant anymore. A question is when to finalize the "done" list and implementation difficulty ranking?

Discussion of "done" recommendations focused on the research human resources progress through RCUH versus the challenges that remain for UH HR. This item is now split into two.

Vassilis said that his office is trying to address HR issues within the research context. A brief historical review ensued. The Legislature wants to know about RCUH/UH employment (2400 employees, 1800 have been at RCUH more than three years, which was considered at some point to be a limit.) No general funds are to be service-ordered to RCUH, especially for employment; some flagrant misuse of the Attachment B exemption for research hires has hurt us. Vassilis will conduct more stringent reviews going forward. In addition, the VPRI office is planning to review annually for its report every RCUH employee with more than 3 years of employment. The consensus was that HR management for research is a topic that needs more information and discussion. (Some pertinent BoR and legal documents were distributed by e-mail following the meeting.)

One of the accomplishments noted was that the UARC was established. However, the RAB is not aware of its current status, such as number of researchers, number of active projects, annual funding, etc.

Review of recommendations from previous research advisory reports revealed a number that might be relatively straightforward to implement.

An important need is for open, annual reporting of how funds invested in research are allocated. Vassilis said he will be posting information and reports on his website (annual reports, RTRF reports, ORS annual budget #s, OTTED Annual budget #s, VCR #s, RCUH management fee reports, etc.) UH financial reporting requirements are considerably different from role models for research financial reports (e.g. U. Washington), which presents a challenge.

Another possibly straightforward matter is to establish clear lines of authority and responsibility, with reasonable standards across the UH System. For example, it was noted that at KCC, it takes eight signatures and one month lead time to rent a vehicle. There are so many signatures that the responsibility is spread too thin and no one is held accountable for anything. A smaller number of signatures are needed to streamline processes and so that people signing have more accountability. Perhaps the UH Business Process Council can address these issues as a high priority.

It was agreed that UH can and should provide meaningful non-financial rewards (e.g. space and facilities; this meshes with the recommendation for periodic reviews of existing allocations of space and facilities and their quality) to recognize excellent faculty performance. This is essential to encouraging excellent research faculty to stay at UH and perform at their highest levels, an important consideration for advancing the HII concept. RAB members will work with
Vassilis, Brian Taylor, Magdy Iskander and John Moore in developing a faculty fellowship award program, such as presidential faculty fellows for entrepreneurship and/or innovation.

Given opportunities to develop research and innovation at UH, questions concern where to invest and what to invest in? The Office of the VPRI needs RAB to assist the administration in selection of teams to perform confidential reviews of research investment plans; to help set up break-through teams to review and improve areas ripe for reengineering research administration; and to investigate the case for research in UH fundraising.

Forrester's report made the recommendation to investigate the "case" for research, linking to UH Foundation activities. The general case for research has been made by UHERO in its 2012 report [http://www.uhero.hawaii.edu/assets/UHSystemImpactReport-Public.pdf]. Discussion included the need for involving researchers in UHF planning and review activities, and helping UHF to make the case for research and innovation scholarships, fellowships and chairs.

To enable making the case for research in multiple venues, Vassilis would like to compile a UH system corporate research brief and portfolio. It was recommended that Vassilis approach deans and directors to solicit input from faculty to help highlight their research activities. This has been done before, but faculty need to see how their research briefs are being used and they also need some guidance on how such briefs can be made more useful. There is a clear need to keep these presentation materials fresh.

The RAB asked for information on the status of the UH EPSCOR proposal development that is focused on Data Intensive Science and Engineering. Questions included how the EPSCOR activities would mesh with existing research programs, such as remote education and curriculum development.

What are the issues that the group should focus on? We need to ultimately discuss priorities for our meetings, and that requires some sense of what the impacts of pursuing advancement of certain "not done" research report recommendations would be. This needs to be developed by the RAB in collaboration with the VPRI.

Other matters were raised to be addressed in future RAB meetings or possibly through extra-sessional efforts. A specific HR issue was briefly discussed and materials distributed by J. Andaya regarding Form I-9 (employment verification). Right now, everyone whether compensated or not, visiting colleagues, and even affiliates are required to submit this information! Some research collaborators didn’t visit UH because they didn’t want to fill out I-9 forms. This issue may have been resolved following the meeting.