

**LVX  
VERITAS  
VIRTUS**

**Research Policy Oversight Committee  
2020-2021**

Faculty Senate Report  
21 April 2021



# 2020-2021 RPOC members

- Tamara Bonaci (NTT Prof-Khoury-Seattle)
- Kim Holloway (VP of Research; *ex officio*)
- Amy Lu (Assoc Prof-CAMD/BCHS-CommStudies/HealthSciences)
- Steve Lustig (Assoc Prof-COE-ChemEngr)
- Patricia Mabrouk (Prof-COS-Chem)
- Michael Arnold Mages (Asst Prof-CAMD-Art&Design)
- Eric Stewart (Asst VP,Dir.,SpacePlanning; *ex officio*)
- Richard Wamai (Assoc Prof-CSSH-Cultures)

# 2020-2021 RPOC charges

---

1. Review NU-RES and Accounts Payable pre-award and post-award processes.
2. The committee shall examine the policies related to research activities and space.
3. Other charges may be determined by the Senate Agenda Committee as new priorities arise- Postdoc Policy Implementation.

# 2020-2021 RPOC charge 2

---

The committee shall examine the policies related to research activities and space. In particular, the following items should be examined leading to recommendations:

- (a) Implementation of template agreements regarding shared resources (space and equipment) in accordance with the recent senate resolution and with the Provost's Office (Sr. Vice-Provost for Research);
- (b) Shared research activity and space restrictions, limitations (and opportunities) implemented by NU initiatives for combating COVID-19, along with recently-established policies and procedures for their execution.

## Procedures:

---

- Discussed RPOC member experiences with shared space
- Interviewed postdoc, junior and senior investigators in COE, CSSH, Bouvé, Khoury
- Engaged University administrators having roles in research and space allocation
- Drafted a template for shared resource charters
- Sought feedback from those interviewed
- Refined template for shared resource charters

# Findings

- ❖ There are multitudes of good reasons to share space/resources among colleges, departments- trouble-free sharing requires active coordination and stewardship
- ❖ College of Engineering operates with a Research Space Policy that already includes a provision for the operation of shared spaces.
  - This policy addresses all operational, cost and personnel related topics.
  - All stakeholders are notified and permitted feedback before changes.
  - COE cannot enforce policy with colleges that don't have such policy.
- ❖ Strategies/planning can help stakeholders to avoid common challenges
- ❖ Template charter for specific shared spaces/resources has generalized strategies:  
Define:
  - ✓ What is shared
  - ✓ Purpose & Operation
  - ✓ Roles and Stakeholders
  - ✓ Administration Support
  - ✓ Communication Procedures
  - ✓ Arbitration/Mediation MechanismBinding Signatures

## Recommendations:

---

- The RPOC recommends that the charter agreement template be hosted in perpetuity by the office of the Provost and disseminated to college Deans' staff for use in all instances of shared spaces.
- In the next academic year, RPOC should solicit feedback from the colleges and update the charter template accordingly.

# 2020-2021 RPOC charge 1

The Committee shall review NU-RES and Accounts Payable pre-award and post-award processes to identify how they can be made more efficient and more visible to faculty to better serve faculty and their funders.

In particular, the following areas should be examined leading to recommendations:

- (a) **Adoption of template contracts** and Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to expedite contract approvals;
- (b) **Future phases of ePAWs** that can track expenditures on existing research accounts – verify the implementation of a “dashboard interface” for faculty to monitor status and delays;
- (c) **Establishing a set of key performance indicators** that can meaningfully be used by NU-RES and RPOC to monitor productivity and process efficiency for faculty investigators.



## Procedures:

---

- The Committee had its first meeting on November 11, 2020
- On February 22, 2021, the Committee met with NU Office of Human Subject Research Protection (NU HSRP) Director, Nan Regina
- Additionally, feedback via email was solicited from other senior leaders within NU-RES via the Vice Provost for Research Administration, Robin Cyr.

# Findings

- ❖ (a) **Adoption of templates contracts and NDAs** was proposed by NU-RES to RPOC in 2019–20. This is completed.
  - Access to these templates is available in provided URLs
  - Further action on this point would include promoting the availability of these templates and related expedited procedures to faculty investigators
- ❖ (b) **Future phases of ePAWs need to be determined**.
  - ITS is currently hiring several dedicated positions to transition support and future development of ePAWs v2.0 inhouse.
- ❖ (c) **Establishing a set of key performance indicators for NU-RES:**
  - NU-RES has established KPIs and provides a weekly productivity reports to Vice Provost for Research; Continuity Task Force & ADRs for each college
  - The survey has been completed, and results shared with stakeholders at NU.
  - Additional indicators and processes are recommended

# Recommendations

---

## We recommend

- A continuous exchange of operational information and system/platform updates on a regular base among the NURES, HSRP, and RPOC to facilitate faculty/research staff members' understanding of the university's progress.
- That RPOC meet (once quarterly?) with NU-RES and HSRP staff to review KPIs and progress towards goals. RPOC committee could follow up during Fall of 2021 with NURES and ITS on development of ePAWs v2.0
- Additional indicators and processes are likely needed in NU-RES to identify and resolve contracts that are not progressing with effective expediency

# 2020-2021 RPOC charge 3

## Postdoc Policy Implementation:

- Background: In January 2021, a new University policy on postdocs with external funding was announced
- Procedures: The RPOC sought background, context and clarification from the Provost's office, ADRs and from college leadership
- Findings: RPOC determined that background discussion came about as a result of requests from HR and the Office of the General Council at Northeastern to have postdoctoral hiring practices aligned and compliant with the Fair Labor Standards Act

# Recommendations

**RPOC report contains full background, 14 areas of concern and 5 recommendations:**

1. Need a definitive list of fellowships/examples that would be subject to this policy (NU-RES is working on a list)
2. Need to involve research leadership at the institution at an earlier stage to inform policy and give a sense of ownership
3. Need for specific process for determining the type of fellowship – promoting consistency in implementation, meritocracy, and process
4. Extend time to apply for Provost matching funds for this policy (to Dec 30, 2021)
5. Need a thorough review of the career development activities available to postdoctoral associates and fellows across the board

# Proposed future charge

---

Graduate student-advisor relationships