

UM Senate Assembly  
**Research Policies Committee**  
Office of the Vice President for Research  
Friday, May 11, 2007  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon  
4006 Fleming

**Minutes**

**RPC members present:** Carl Akerlof, Toni Antonucci, Chris Baldwin, Mary Haan, Josephine Kasa-Vubu, Angela Kuznia, Kristin Seefeldt, Elizabeth Young, Qian Zhu

**RPC members absent:** Jerald Bachman, David Blair, Michael Combi, Cynthia Marcelo, Usha Pasupuleti, Carol Persad, Kazuhiro Saitou

**OVPR staff present:** Pam Smock, Jackie Hoats-Shields (committee staff)

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m.

**1. Consideration of minutes from March 9, 2007**

**Mary Haan:** Motion to approve the minutes as written.

**Vote:** All in favor.

**2. Data sharing: discussion of possible recommendations**

The committee was provided with draft observations from the year's discussions on the topic of data archiving. Mary Haan briefly reviewed highlights from various guests who had visited RPC. She said one outcome of the discussions is the idea that a University-wide task force would be a good next step.

Committee members discussed how data archiving needs in the health sciences, for example, are much different from those in the physical sciences. It was commented that across the University there will be much diversity in the types of systems needed. In this fast-changing technical environment a one-size-fits-all approach will not serve the needs of individual researchers. Furthermore, in some fields funding agencies drive the format of data storage. There was agreement that imposing a single data archiving structure on faculty would not be desirable.

It was proposed that the University initiate discussions with NIH to encourage them to develop an archiving mechanism as some other funding agencies have done. It was agreed that an effort at higher-level discussions with NIH should be initiated, and to involve other institutions in the discussions as well, if appropriate.

On the local front, a University task force, Professor Haan said, would bring together individuals knowledgeable about the many sides of this issue, including the related human subjects issues, to develop a means to assist people who want or need to archive

their data. It is recognized that not everyone will be archiving their data in the same way, and some data may not end up being archived.

There was agreement that assistance on the front end of a project would be most helpful as this could affect how data will be coded. Young PIs getting their first RO1 grants were noted as a group that could especially use guidance in this area.

Another challenge is how to best combine health and social science data. An example is work that adds biomarkers to social science data.

The unique problems of storing imaging data were noted, along with the importance of having a reliable system for backups.

The point was made that the University should be urged to satisfy archiving needs at the “cluster” level instead of at the global level—rather than archiving data at the University level, this should be done in smaller groupings, probably based on some combination of the type of data being archived, disciplinary divisions, campus geography, etc.. It was noted that a task force would likely not address archiving in such detail, but instead would consider developing resources to handle data in various ways from a variety of fields.

The job of the task force would likely be to develop recommendations for the University on what resources are available within the university and how best to use them.

Discussion turned to who might be on the task force. Because of its vast experience, the group agreed ICPSR should be a major part of the effort. Potential candidates for the group were mentioned representing various parts of the University: the Library, ISR, Medical School, Public Health, LSA, School of Information, Engineering. It was also suggested that a representative from Google be invited to join the task force.

Professor Haan summarized what seem to be the major elements of RPC’s recommendations:

- Create a task force
- Develop a plan for coordination of resources
- Initiate discussions with NIH

Mary Haan will work on the draft recommendations and send it out to the committee next week.

### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.