Updates (Bill Seaman)

- **Funding for Pre-Award Support** – The campus has approved the new Pre-Award Funding Model reported & discussed at the Council’s November 12th meeting. The new model will be based on actual proposal volume as opposed to a percentage of indirect cost dollars. Talmadge will follow the recommendation of the Council to not follow the new methodology internally when assessing DOM Divisions for pre-award services. DOM divisions will continue to be assessed based on a percentage of annual indirect cost dollars.

- **Indirect Costs** Waiver Policy Changes – Changes in the current IDC waiver policy are being proposed by a campus IDC Waiver Policy Task Force formed to address steadily increasing deficits in UCSF’s 10-year operating budget. The task force recommends two major changes: 1) Reduce the number of proposals requiring a waiver by doing away with the waiver requirement for government or non-profit sponsors who have a published rate, even if this rate does not comply with UCSF’s federal negotiated F&A rate and 2) Require support for indirect costs when this does not reach a defined minimum. To start, this minimum will be set at 10% of direct costs, charge equivalent to the assessment of gifts. The second requirement will be for someone (PI, Division, Department, or School) to pay the difference between what is paid by the sponsor and the set minimum. If agency guidelines allow, F&A expenses may be included in the direct cost budget to cover the indirects. Training and career development awards would be exempt from the minimum rate structure. The hope of the task force is that this will recover dollars that go against the bottom line for the University.

- **Physician Scientist Scholars Program** – DOM put in seven candidates and three were selected to continue in the application process. The final decisions will be made by the end of February 2014.

- **Departmental Research Server** – There are no current plans to invest in a departmental server dedicated to research. IT staff cited high cost to maintain as a primary reason.

Continuation: Discussion of RMS Issues (Bill Seaman & Maye Chrisman)

Following last month’s discussion around RMS issues and means for improving the working relation between RMS and investigators in the Department of Medicine, a common set of issues have emerged: proximity of investigators with RMS staff; communication; and greater ownership of the pre-award process by RMS. Maye Chrisman updated the Council on activities of a workgroup created by the SOM Budget and Finance Committee; the charge of the workgroup was to look at cost efficiencies related to OE. The workgroup interviewed all of the MSO’s in the School of Medicine, as well as selected employees from RMS, and HR. The committee also reviewed the results of the OE evaluations, which were based on surveys and interviews with participants. Susanne Hildebrand-Zanki will present the survey results regarding RMS in the next RAB meeting. Some of the current issues are: 1) Turnover of RSCs – this is an ongoing issue as new RSCs have to learn the job and how to work with individual faculty members and divisional staff; 2) Lack of standardization –lack of efficiency and best practices, which causes burnout and lack of PI confidence. PI’s have found that there is very little standardization between the RMS teams. The RSCs who participated in the focus group indicated that some of the variability is driven by a desire to provide good customer service, but can have the opposite result, by creating expectations that cannot be regularly met. Variance in service level from RSC to RSC also could stem from lack of a common definition of what is “pre-award”; as a result, departmental staff take over tasks that they and the faculty consider pre-award tasks while some RSCs feel that they are doing the pre-award work and some of the “post-award” work. The MSO’s may not be aware of the full extent of work being done by the PIs and their direct support; 3) Unclear guidance from RMS leadership – In addition to assigning the work, managing the change process and providing clear guidance is key, and; 4) Lack of
confidence — Taking ownership of the process would gain the PI’s confidence. RMS staff working long hours and sending communications on weekends, while evidencing commitment, does not inspire confidence and/or provide evidence of efficiency. PIs are doing a lot of monitoring of RMS because the confidence in the service is not there. Stakes are high for not meeting deadlines w/pre-award.

Some solutions/thoughts posed by the Council were to better clarify the RMS Service Level Agreement. How much of the problem stems from systems versus people? Take good people and put them under a good management structure and give them a clear career path, with standardized expectations. From the view of many PIs, there is inadequate management and education/training. Good people don’t necessarily make good managers. How are the managers taught to manage? Who is in charge? Are the managers merely delegating or are they making sure the work is getting done?

It is a strange outcome that the formation of a central unit has not resulted in standardization. Faculty are more likely to accept more standardization if it is accompanied by a robust management model and consistent assignments of RSCs, with standard deadlines. Long-shared experience creates the expertise to manage the pre/post award. Faculty has had to hire their own in-house people to re-create consistency.

The Council will continue this discussion at the next meeting, inviting Maye Chrisman to return and Susanne Hildebrand-Zanki and Marge O’Halloran to join and hear the concerns and proposed improvements of the Council.

**Future Meeting:** Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 8:00 - 9:00 am, Parnassus Room S-226