


Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
Seton Hall University

From: Karen E. Boroff, Ph.D. 
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: Opposition to Potential Changes in OGRE, CFD, and IRB
(2019-FS-06)

Date: March 19, 2019

I am in receipt of Faculty Senate Resolution 2019-FS-06.

Let me address the concerns raised by the administrative structure that combines grants / research and the IRB. As I shared with both the executive committee of the Senate on March 1 and with the full Senate on March 8, Dr. Snow is taking a well-deserved sabbatical for the 2019-2020 academic year. That provides the opportunity for my office, as all offices are doing, to find ways to restructure or organize work activities. I have decided to combine grants / research / IRB functions and to dedicate more actual time, over a 12-month period, to these functions. For the past two years, Drs. Snow and Ruzicka have met with me as a unit, since IRB has directly reported to Grants [for five years, now], and never has there ever been an instance of the ethical lapses or pressure this resolution hypothesizes. In an examination of federal grants requiring IRB approval, for fiscal 2018, of the \$23 million in grants, \$159,000 were ones where human subjects and IRB review have intersected, and even with the team reporting relationship, there were no issues of IRB / grant lapses. I do reject the hypothesis that a person hired for grants would cast aside human subject care, especially given our Catholic mission. Defined protocols of IRB, and protocols for expedited IRBs, federally funded or not, will be established or expanded, to provide additional clarity and protect human subjects. As you probably are already aware, the Code of Federal Regulations requires that all protocols be published.

There are other important checks and balances in the IRB approval process. The expertise of faculty and the dean in approving research projects that need to be forwarded to IRB will still continue. These proposals, at the college level, will continue to ensure that research questions are well-articulated and that the proposed research methodology can answer the research questions. Affirmation of scientific methods can be affirmed or improved at this level as well, given the college expertise. Most important, this first review will begin to ensure that human subjects are protected. The IRB review board members at the University level will continue their work in reviewing applications. The new hire will be required to provide monthly activity reports, to increase the transparency of operations, serving yet as another moment to ensure all that we do protects human subjects. As I said at the Senate meeting, no grant will ever be put forth where the IRB has denied the application; that has always been the case here at Seton Hall.

Ethicspoint will continue to be a useful vehicle to register concerns. In benchmarking other universities, organizational structures do vary. There is no one right way nor are there mandated structures in the federal regulations.

At the meeting on March 1, you asked if I would consider the proposed compensation of \$50,000 with one course release each semester to a lower stipend with 2 courses of released time each semester. I have modified this job position, following your suggestion. The 12-month position will be posted and faculty can apply. If there are no internal candidates, then I shall seek a part-time administrator. As part of this position, monthly reports will be prepared, giving status of the number of grant applications, and their status. Likewise, statistics on IRB volume will also be put forth. These changes, among others, all strive to provide more support and exposure for both grants and the IRB. I do not have the funds for a full-time administrator. I am trying to do as much as is possible, with the many, many requests for funds that are made.

Regarding faculty development, this office has already added several new initiatives for in 2018-19 alone. We have created a new webpage on advising, providing faculty additional resources to help all of us in our important work in advising. We also recently announced faculty support grants for those faculty who mentor and guide undergraduates in research projects. I secured a \$50,000 gift that underwrote faculty development work on the interdisciplinary aspects of the encyclicals and on the concept of water. I, along with Msgr. Ziccardi, also carved out support for work under the auspices of inclusion. As I expressed to the executive committee on March 1 and again to the Senate March 8, I am infusing more money into faculty development, in the form of grant applications of \$10,000 for which the colleges and the Faculty Senate can apply. These total \$80,000 and will be driven by the specific faculty development needs of the colleges. Colleges are free to craft mini-grants totaling \$10,000; of course, colleges can invite colleagues from other units to attend or otherwise participate in the events hosted by their own colleges. Grant applications, which will be relatively easy to complete, do ask requestors to specify the outcomes they seek to achieve with the grant, how they will measure these outcomes, and subsequently to compile an after-action report. This is standard practice in any grant application and I know we all can agree that this kind of stewardship of resources is important. As I indicated last week, the executive committee did ask me on March 1 to have faculty members review the grant applications and on Friday at the Senate meeting, I said I would accept that input. Most likely, I shall ask recently tenured professors to help deliberate on these applications. In all, this facet of faculty development is a reasonable experiment and adds to and does not subtract from faculty development support.

Beyond this, I indicated that the current writing program will continue under Dr. Balkun's able leadership. The one-day faculty orientation will be elongated to a semester-long orientation, and Dr. Balkun has agreed to work with Dr. Burton on this. Likewise, Dr. Balkun has agreed to offer several other seminars (3 to 5) over the academic year. Perhaps over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year, both the college grants as well as these other initiatives may combine to suggest input for the Senate's Faculty Development Committee, and post these items. Right now, there is not much posted, but perhaps there is a lag on reports and subsequent posting.

In the course of several months, the Senate has expressed concern about connecting more with retired faculty members. I have responded to that concern, by establishing a coordinator of retired faculty, with support of an annual stipend of \$1,500. This will be announced shortly. This is yet another reasonable experiment, and, yes, a modest one, but one that tries to do what we can to improve ourselves.

I totally reject the sentiment that I do not respect shared governance. I do and I have made modifications on the matters of this resolutions with your suggestions. More broadly, I have strived to include Senate leadership in areas where, heretofore, they have had little or no presence. I have been extraordinarily transparent in sharing information. I daresay that the amount of information that the faculty has on the finances of this institution is the most expansive the faculty *has ever had*.

This office, ultimately, has a fiduciary responsibility to manage the University's resources. In the end, all of us must strive for continuous improvement at every turn, even if continuous improvement means a change in any operating practice. For this office to do otherwise would be a lapse in this office's duty of care, one of fundamental tenets of being a fiduciary, and I will not do that.