

Guidance on Emeritus Faculty member service as Principal Investigator, co-Principal Investigator, or Research Fellow on research projects

Background

Members of the Emeritus faculty can make valuable continuing contributions to the university's missions, including service as Principal Investigator (PI) or co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on research grants and contracts. The PI's and co-PI's responsibilities include many for which the university makes explicit promises to stakeholders, including obligations to research sponsors, commitments to volunteers in human subjects studies, and commitment to wise and respectful use of animals in research.

University policies require a PI or co-PI to be a university employee. In addition to compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, status as an employee, accountable to an appropriate person in the academic ranks, establishes a line of accountability consistent with the legal obligations and assurances the university makes to stakeholders. On occasion, there is intent that a member of the Emeritus faculty serve as PI or co-PI, and that the person prepare and submit grant applications and protocols for institutional review prior to availability of funding necessary to establish employment. This guidance describes means by which submission of grant applications and Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) submissions can be accepted and processed in anticipation of the Emeritus faculty member's engagement as an employee.

Note: An Emeritus Faculty Member who wishes to continue research activities at the university into retirement, without taking on the obligations of PI or co-PI may seek an appointment as an unpaid Research Fellow. In the event that the Emeritus Faculty Member wishes to continue drawing upon the funds in an existing research account (or any other type of university account) they should arrange prior to retiring for the intended use of the account, with an appropriate university employee such as a department chair or institute director or designate having signature authority on the account. See the description of University Research Fellowship Appointments on Provost's web site.

Guidance

Submission of grant applications in anticipation of employment

When a member of the Emeritus faculty anticipates service as a principal investigator or co-Principal Investigator and is not a current employee, or in the case that the person's appointment will expire prior to the start of the research project, the proposed PI or co-PI, department chair or institute/center director, and dean should proceed as follows:

1. The Chair of the appropriate department or Director of the appropriate institute or center and the Dean of the College to whom the Chair or Director reports (or the Dean alone if the Emeritus faculty member is to report directly to the Dean), should provide a letter to the Emeritus faculty member describing the intent to engage the Emeritus faculty member as a Research Scientist, Engineer or Scholar at the appropriate rank, with pay, contingent upon receipt of funding for the research

project. For a member of the faculty continuing research in their core field, the rank of Principal Research Scientist or Scholar is appropriate. The letter should make clear the intent of the Chair, Director or Dean to maintain the same relationship with the Emeritus faculty member as is maintained with any full time member of the departmental or college faculty. The letter need not comprise a formal offer of employment; it should merely express intent to provide an appropriate appointment upon availability of funding.

2. Thereafter, proposals and protocols may be submitted, with the Chair, Director, or Dean's approval as applicable under grant submission, IRB and IACUC policies and procedures. Prior to the Emeritus faculty member becoming an employee, a copy of the letter described above should be attached to each submission.

Salary and effort determination

Annual salary needs to be appropriate for the position and responsibilities. Salaries for such positions vary by field and specific required expertise. The person's previous salary as a faculty member may be fully justified especially when it would be difficult to identify an alternative person for the role. Considering the cessation of full responsibilities of a faculty member, a reduction may be appropriate as well. The academic unit needs to consider equity including relative salaries of people at different ranks and the nature of the person's responsibilities.

Percent effort committed to a research project must adhere to the following principles:

1. Percent effort must be what is necessary and sufficient for the person to carry out their role on the project.
2. Time volunteered as an unpaid Research Fellow cannot be used to fulfill a formal obligation to a sponsor. All effort committed to a sponsored project must be compensated as part of the paid appointment. Project budgets and timelines, and allocation of responsibilities among personnel, need to be planned accordingly.

Revisions

July, 2018: Additional guidance on salary determination and principles of effort commitment