

Minutes of the
CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE COMMISSION

December 3, 2015
Conference call initiated from
Fort Ransom Room at North Dakota Department of Commerce
Bismarck, ND

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Nisbet, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am

Commissioners Present: Mark Nisbet, Greg Stemen, Mike Ness, Tim Hennessy, Jim Traynor, Kevin Melicher

Others Present: Al Anderson, Justin Dever and Christopher Kalash of the ND Department of Commerce

Consent Agenda

Kalash covered the consent agenda

It was moved by Ness and seconded by Melicher, to approve the consent agenda with item b. taken removed to allow it to be discussed during Commission Business. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Commission Business

Proof of Concept Cloud Condensation Nucleus Counter for Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Change request for a timeline extension request – Kalash stated that this is a second timeline extension request. This request, as written, is outside of the COE Commission policy of timeline extensions longer than one year.

It was moved by Hennessy and seconded by Stemen, to grant the extension, within COE Commission policy, to May 31, 2016. If the project cannot be completed, the PI may come to the commission in May for consideration of a policy exception. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Development of glioma prognosis kit

Change request for a timeline extension request – Kalash stated that this timeline extension request was received on the initially agreed upon start date. The project started late, consequently they are not asking for more time, they are asking for the amount of time that was planned.

It was moved by Ness and seconded by Melicher to approve the timeline extension. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Audit Reimbursements for UND and NDSU

COE Commission policy states that the COE Commission will reimburse up to 50% of the audit costs of Centers of Excellence. There was discussion about the difference between the costs of NDSU's and UND's audits. The commission took note of the difference in the costs each is paying for these audits.

It was moved by Melicher and seconded by Hennessy to approve the reimbursements for both UND and NDSU. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Proposed change to policy for COE Enhancement grant reporting requirements.

Dever explained that Centers of Excellence Enhancement Grants are a subset of Centers of Excellence. They do not have a matching requirement. The commission has the authority to waive the 6-10 year reporting requirement. The Enhancement grant recipients have expended all of their grant funds and the reports do not contain much new information. He shared a proposed change to Centers of Excellence Commission policy that would allow Enhancement Grant recipients to be exempted from the annual agreed upon procedures engagement requirement after all funds distributed to the recipient have been expended.

It was moved by Ness and seconded by Melicher to approve the policy change. Motion carried on a voice vote.

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It was moved by Ness and seconded by Melicher to approve the policy change. Motion carried on a voice vote.

COE Enhancement - Materials and Nanotechnology Center Enhancement Grant – request to end postaward monitoring

It was moved by Stemen and seconded by Traynor to approve allowing the Materials and Nanotechnology Center Enhancement Grant to be released from postaward monitoring to the extent that the functional reviews and agreed upon procedures are no longer required, but continued updates on progress that the MNT makes toward sustainability are expected to still be provided. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Administratively Approved Changes and Reports

Kalash updated the commission on initial disbursements made to FastTrack, Research ND and Phase I Venture Grant recipients.

Kalash reported that one Phase 1 Venture Grant submitted a final report. Reduction of Gas Flaring by Advanced Separation and Storage stated that the results were promising and they plan to apply for a Phase 2 grant in the near future.

Kalash shared that five Research ND, five Phase 1 Venture Grant and one Phase 1&2 Venture Grant submitted interim reports with acceptable progress and results.

Discussion of Centers

Anderson stated that CNSE had some great results and NDSU will need to make some decisions about the direction it is choosing for the future of its research. The loss of earmarks has affected this. Dever added that a concern is that there are still federal grant funds available, but they are awarded on a competitive basis. Many of the researchers from CNSE have stayed on as researchers. Those in this group have had their centers moved from Research to academic departments which means they also have teaching duties in their respective academic departments.

Nisbet asked that Commerce make sure that it keeps the commission aware of any further changes.

Stemen asked about available funding for research. Dever stated that available funding has been relatively flat.

Melicher asked about Research 2 and who is in charge of the facility. Dever stated that he believes the VP of Research at NDSU is in charge of the leasing of the building. There are limitations that exist on who can rent in Research 2 based on the financing used to build the facility.

Nisbet asked about arranging with the presidents to talk about the future and what they are focusing on and how the commission can play a role that can assist them in their visions. Anderson said we can do that

2014 Monitoring Report Review

LRSC – Dakota Precision Ag Center - It was moved by Hennessy and seconded by Ness to list this center as “On Track” in the 2014 Monitoring Report. Motion carried on a voice vote.

