

RPES Advisory Committee Conference Call

FY 16 – Q2, March 1, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Membership:

- Chair – Brian Wienhold, PA
- Christi Swaggerty, PA
- Ann Callahan, NEA
- Jim Harnly, NEA (absent)
- Jungmin Lee, PWA
- Peter Follett, PWA (new)
- Cynthia Henson, MWA (new)
- Claire Baffaut, MWA
- Kyoung Ro, SEA
- Arthur Hinton, Jr., SEA (new)
- Amy Hegarty, RPES
- Dana Lamberti, RPES

Agenda:

- Call to order, welcome, and Transition to new members Brian
- Status report of old business Amy
- New business Brian/Amy
- Next meeting and adjournment Brian

Introduction and transition to new members:

- Three Committee members' terms expired 2/28/16 (Grisham, Huber, and Naranjo); we thank them for their dedicated service!
- This year's transition includes a new Committee Chairperson, Brian Wienhold
- Welcome to our new members: Cynthia Henson (MWA), Peter Follett (PWA), and Arthur Hinton, Jr. (SEA)
- Amy will update the RPES Advisory Committee web site and our membership service dates, issue to all, and post on our share point site. Amy will grant access to the new members as well.

Old Business:

Status of FY 16 Activity:

- New Panelist Orientation was held November 17-18 for 30 new panelists; includes 6 new HR Specialists. Another session is being held in April for 15 more trainees.
- New Panel Chair training will be held March 2, 2016 – 21 participants

- Amy and Dana to travel to Ft. Collins (March 17) and Stoneville to meet with Area Office and Cat 1s
- Two panels have been moved to teleconference (reduced panel load from changes)

Year of the RL (Brian and Amy): YRL is evolving into a new format that will change title to YRL 2.0; quarterly in-person summits of about 30-50 participants each (e.g., Grand Challenge, Role of the RL, and Location/BSC Partnerships); and probable quarterly webinars/cohort discussions.

- RLs have been invited to The Grand Challenge Summit being held in Beltsville from April 5-7. See “New Business” for more information.
- Amy will invite the RPES Advisory Committee to the general webinar events

Supergrade Panel was held November 19 – out of seven cases, three were recommended for promotion to ST.

- Four of the five waiting in queue for ST slot ahead of this “class” were promoted effective 11/15/15; one was just promoted in February.
- Three remain in queue from November 2015 panel waiting on an ST slot to open.

GS-15 Subcommittee (Ann):

- The subcommittee (Brian, Ann, and Dana) sent a letter to Dr. Liu asking if he is open to the RPES Advisory Committee revisiting the suggestions proposed a few years ago to streamline the RPES for GS-15s. He supported the proposal.
- The subcommittee will proceed with a survey (launch off the comments collected by the last survey) and suggestions for changes. We’ll talk more about this at our next quarterly meeting (in-person) when we have more time.
- The genesis of some of the years-old concerns are based on a few factors: there is such low percentage of GS-15s being upgraded that the request is for a simpler review process in light of the most recent study, about 70% of the GS-15s were not satisfied with the current process.
- The subcommittee needs more help: Peter and Cynthia volunteered to join the effort.

New Business:

The ARS Grand Challenge: Dr. Shafer’s recent webinar – are there any implications for the RPES Program that we need to consider?

- We agreed that there is importance in researchers identifying their role within a team and reflecting that accurately in the case writeup
- We also agreed to continue to monitor this effort for any further implications on the RPES Program.

Questions have come in regarding the use of links in RPES case writeups. The RPES Team has denied the requests because it is thought that this will add layers of resources beyond the scope of the writeup and increased burden to the panel members evaluating the case. We would like the full Committee’s feedback.

- Current policy does not allow website links in accomplishment statements however a link is allowable as an exhibit (the researcher simply identifies the link on a pdf and submits that).
- If website links are allowed anywhere else in the case, we envision an administrative burden with monitoring the accuracy of the sites, appropriateness of the links, etc. in addition to the additional burden on the panel members to investigate this additional information.
- The Committee agreed to table this for now and add it to our agenda for our next meeting, in-person when we have more time.

Supergrade evaluations: the “new” GS-15 policy changed the review cycle to every 7 years, but did not address the GS-15s that are in queue in the Supergrade Panel cycle (still being reviewed every 5 years).

- Current policy: those cases reviewed by a SG panel that score a 56 are recommended for ST. Those that score a 54 are returned to the mandatory review cycle (5 years); next review is by SG panel. Those that score a 52 or 50 are returned to the regular panel mandatory review cycle (7 years).
- Do we want to draft a memo for Dr. Liu’s signature to include this group in the 7-year cycle? Or, do we keep this group in the five-year cycle?
 - The Committee agreed to keep this group in the five-year cycle, as long as the RPES Team is able to manage the administrative difference/burden. (The RPES Team agrees that we can manage it.)
- Also with Supergrade, criteria #3 (form attached) caused extensive discussions in the November SG panel. A few of the panelists suggested that we identify a range of what is noteworthy for this criteria. Others said that this is affected by the physical location of the lab (more remote locations attract fewer; those near a city attract more). Is this something we want to tackle or leave as is?
 - The committee agreed to leave this guidance as it is, intentionally broad.
- We will identify a few STs to serve as a resource to the committee as needed for these kinds of issues.

New Category 1 Researcher Memos: are being issued by RPES Team. These memos provide basic information about the Program, resources, etc. and include the names of the two RPES Advisory Committee members from the respective Area. You will be provided a cc of each memo issued.

Next Meeting:

FY 16 Q3 – **in person** June 29-30
 (travel June 28 and July 1; RPES will pay for travel)
 Location: TBD soon, finalizing conference space)
 Please pencil this in your calendars!