

ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS

Minutes of the Research and Health Sciences Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Research and Health Sciences Committee was held virtually on March 26, 2021.

Committee Members Present via video: Regent DuVal, Chair, Regent Manson, Vice Chair, Regent Shoopman, Regent Ridenour, Regent King, Regent Dave, and Regent Penley (Departed between 10:29 a.m. – 11:07 a.m.)

Other Regents Present via video: Regent Rusk

From Arizona State University via video: Christine Wilkinson, Sally Morton, Neal Woodbury, and Joshua LaBaer.

From Northern Arizona University via video: Christy Farley, Dean Smith, Andrew Koppisch, Paul Keim and Gayla Stoner.

From the University of Arizona via video: President Robbins, Jon Dudas, Betsy Cantwell, and Michael Worobey.

From the Board Office via video: Executive Director, John Arnold, Nancy Tribbensee, Chad Sampson, Jennifer Pollock, Samantha Blevins, Tom Merriam, Suzanne Templin, and Debbie Sale.

Closed Captioner: Nicole Flaherty

Chair DuVal called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Item 1)

Upon motion by Regent DuVal, and second by Regent Manson, the committee approved the minutes of the October 24, 2019 Research and Health Sciences Committee Meeting.

Regents, DuVal, Manson, Shoopman, Ridenour, King, Dave and Penley voting in favor. None opposed and none abstained. Motion passed.

Overview of Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) (Item 2)

Chad Sampson presented this item.

Regent DuVal asked about how TRIF will change upon the twenty-year mark. Mr. Sampson answered that the legislature extended TRIF as is, so the legislation is no longer voter protected. The legislature could alter or modify the distribution or how the tax revenues would be required to be used.

Regent Manson asked if there is the possibility that the legislature could remove the twelve percent distribution that the universities receive and reallocate it elsewhere. Mr. Sampson answered that it is a possibility, which Christy Farley, NAU agreed, and added that there has been a lot of community support for Proposition 301, but it is possible, that a change to the distribution model could occur.

Regent Shoopman agreed with Ms. Farley's assessment and encourages the university system to have examples and data to communicate the benefits of TRIF for the state of Arizona.

Regent King asked if there was an overlap of TRIF and the new economy initiative. Mr. Sampson said that TRIF does support this, and it is often discussed in terms of ways that TRIF supports work force development, especially in high technology industries.

Regent Ridenour wanted to know if TRIF funding could be used to expand access to the universities for students in need. Mr. Sampson advanced to one of his presentation slides to illustrate how NAU, for example, dedicates \$4.5 million dollars a year toward access and workforce development. At this point, though, the enterprise has not created a student-centered financial aid fund using TRIF dollars.

This was a discussion item; no action required

TRIF Investment Initiatives Areas and Outline of TRIF 5 Year Plan Requirements (FY 2022-2026) (Item 3)

Chad Sampson presented this item and reviewed the TRIF Investment Initiative Areas and the TRIF 5 Year Plan Requirements. Regent DuVal asked if there has been discussion about refreshing the investment areas that were adopted in 2010. Dr. Cantwell, UArizona and Dr. Woodbury, ASU, answered that the initiative areas are broad, which provides flexibility for the universities to evolve these programs. There have been evaluations and discussions of the categories, and what the future of them might look like.

Regent DuVal also asked to what extent is the enterprise aligning with the state commerce authority's economic development plan for the state? Dr. Cantwell answered that UArizona is embedded with the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) in terms of workforce, and research. They engage monthly with the ACA. Regent DuVal would like to intensify the partnership with the ACA to create more synergy in the relationship as a way to attain desired economic outcomes. Dr. Woodbury agreed and mentioned that there is a tremendous amount of opportunity and said that ASU regularly engages with the ACA on ways that ASU can provide support and drive the economy forward.

Regent Shoopman encouraged engagement with legislatures to remind them of the value that TRIF brings to the state.

This was a discussion item; no action required

University TRIF Presentations (Item 4)

Dr. Morton presented for Arizona State University. Regent King asked how does ASU's use of TRIF funding benefit the average Arizonan? Dr. Morton shared that she thought it was economy driven, but also it is important to talk about things such as bringing COVID testing in very quickly, and more recently, the vaccination efforts which are ways that this funding impacts the state. Dr. Woodbury added that using TRIF funds to do research that creates technology, which then evolves to the current high-tech ecosystem, benefits Arizona.

Regent DuVal shared that he and all regents are all interested in the question that Regent King asked, as regents carry the public responsibility for relaying data and stories of the benefit of TRIF funds to our state.

President Robbins added that he concurs with points in Dr. Morton's presentation that referred to economic development and the pipeline of jobs in the semiconductor industry as well as the growing biotech and healthcare sectors. TRIF funds enables our universities to be leaders in many areas.

Regent DuVal asked if there are commitments made to local tech companies regarding the pace of graduate growth in the engineering school. Dr. Morton explained that while there are not direct agreements, they are in communication with tech companies about what engineering expertise the companies need. ASU consistently keeps their educational programs at the state-of-the-art level to align with the skills that the companies' employees need.

Dr. Smith presented for Northern Arizona University.

Dr. Cantwell presented for the University of Arizona.

Regent DuVal commented on how Dr. Cantwell's presentation was designed around mission and goals. Regent Manson added that she appreciated the very clear connection made between UArizona's strengths and their mission and how they are utilizing TRIF funds.

This item was for discussion only, there was no action required.

Proposed Distribution of TRIF Revenue on COVID-19 Detection, Monitoring, and Impact Projects (Item 5)

Dr. Joshua LaBaer, Arizona State University, Dr. Paul Keim, Northern Arizona University and Dr. Michael Worobey, the University of Arizona presented this item.

Regent Ridenour asked how we are positioned nationally, to being on the cutting edge of this type of research.

Dr. Keim answered that this research is unique. While the entire world is working on the same problem, the key is to find how to contribute uniquely using the TRIF funding. And while the funding isn't massive compared to federal grants, it is strategic in that it allows Arizona to be engaged in a national and global, research community. Dr. LaBaer added that they won one of four large grants that was put together by NIH that was a major nationwide competition.

Dr. Worobey stated they have produced research, that has been published in high profile, respected journals, which puts them in the same league as places like Oxford and Harvard who have been on the leading edge of this kind of work.

Regent DuVal complimented this valuable project as it requires relevant and translational science that also provides an excellent narrative.

Regent Shoopman spoke of the importance of approving this motion as it demonstrates state support and helps them in their quest for greater funding from outside of the state.

Upon motion by Regent DuVal, and second by Regent Shoopman, the committee approved forwarding to the board for approval the distribution of \$3,000,000 in TRIF revenues for the universities' collaborative COVID-19 activities and projects as detailed in the executive summary.

Regents, DuVal, Manson, Shoopman, Ridenour, King, Dave and Penley voting in favor. None opposed and none abstained. Motion passed.

AJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Submitted by:

Debbie Sale
Committee Secretary