



## Report to the Dean of Faculty on the Research Advisory Committee, 2019-2020

### Research Advisory Committee:

The Research Advisory Council (RAC) is the Faculty Senate committee that provides advice to the Vice Provost for Research on issues relating to the University research enterprise. During the July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020 year, the RAC contributed to Cornell’s research excellence by reviewing and advising on the top nominees for limited submission grant and award programs.

The table below compares academic year 2018-19 to 2019-20. At the end of the 2018-19 cycle, the team removed several competitions that no longer aligned with the interest of Cornell’s faculty, and a few others have been discontinued. During the 2019-20 FY, the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Development (OSP) implemented the InfoReady Review (IR) system, which allows reviewers to log in to one system, see all applications for their review, and submit their reviews easily online. This has greatly simplified the review process and communications for the RAC, faculty applicants, and OSP staff.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Total number of programs advertised</i>	<i>Number of programs for which we received applications</i>	<i>Number of programs requiring review by RAC</i>
<b>2018-2019</b>	118	47	20
<b>2019-2020</b>	102	45	16

The attached Excel file documents competitions reviewed by limited submissions and RAC from 2016 to present. It includes review outcomes, detailed program data and the applicants for each program.

The RAC’s workload is spread throughout the year, with fewer meetings occurring in the summer months. Terms for RAC members begin on July 1. We strive to streamline our processes and make the service of the RAC as uncomplicated as possible. Thus, beginning in spring 2020, RAC members are now asked, prior to a review, to declare any conflicts of interest with the applicants, and then are excluded as reviewers for those applications. Then, independent of their research area, RAC members are assigned to rank and review all non-COI applications via IR. The preliminary ranking (and specific comments) are consolidated by the Research Development (RD) team and serve as the basis for the larger RAC meeting discussions. In May 2020, in an effort to ensure fairness of voting and ranking given COI-excluded reviewers, the RD team implemented Condorcet voting, using the CIVS system: [https://civs.cs.cornell.edu/civs\\_create.html](https://civs.cs.cornell.edu/civs_create.html). The broad expertise represented on the RAC helps make certain that the most competitive (and well-written) proposals are nominated to move forward in a particular funding competition. Independent of the outcome and as appropriate, constructive feedback is provided to each applicant based on the comments and discussion by the committee.

When a funder considers Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) and Ithaca to be one institution, RD coordinates the application reviews. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Packard, Pew, Searle, Rita Allen, Keck and Hartwell Foundations. Cornell Ithaca and WCM have a cooperative process for reviewing and ranking proposals for joint programs, which differs depending on the program. Occasionally, if one institution has a very small applicant pool, the committee from the other institution might review and rank all the applications together. Otherwise, separate internal competitions are completed, and the winners from each are discussed by the WCM and Ithaca RAC Chairs to determine the strongest candidate(s) for the program. In the 2019-2020 cycle, increased coordination with WCM’s coordinator Florencia Marcucci, has continued to be successful. The



two teams have weekly meetings that focus on competition deadlines and outcomes, striving to align due dates and RAC meetings to streamline processes and maximize time for applicants to prepare their full applications.

**Noteworthy winners from 2019-2020 cycle:**

**Packard Fellowships in Science and Engineering - 2019 Class of Fellows.** The RAC selected Kirstin Petersen out of 10 Ithaca applicants and several Weill researchers. She is one of 22 selected by the Packard Foundation and has been funded \$875,000 over five years. Petersen’s research involves design and coordination of large robot collectives able to achieve complex behaviors beyond the reach of single robot systems, and corresponding studies on how social insects do so in nature.

**Sloan Research Fellowship.** Awarded annually since 1955, this program is one of the oldest of its kind. On average, 126 researchers are awarded two-year fellowships. This competition is managed at the college department level and three faculty members are part of the 2020 class: Robert A. DiStasio, Jr (Chemistry), Christina Delimitrou (Computer Science) and Damek Davis (Mathematics).

**HHMI Gilliam Fellows:** The goal of the Gilliam Fellowships for Advanced Study is to increase the diversity among scientists who are prepared to assume leadership roles in science, particularly as college and university faculty. The program provides awards to pairs of students and their dissertation advisers who are selected for their scientific leadership and commitment to advance diversity and inclusion in the sciences. Marissa Baccas (Jun (Kelly) Liu, Microbiology and Immunology) has been awarded a \$150k HHMI Gilliam fellowship for 2020.

**RAC members and process:**

**RAC Members for 2019-2020**

Name	Department	College	LS/PS/SS*	Term End Date	Net ID
Mariana Wolfner (Chair)	MBG	CAS	LS	2020	mfw5
Hadas Kress-Gazit	MAE	ENG	PS	2020	hk478
Chris Batten	ECE	ENG	PS	2020	cb535
Chris Wildeman	PAM	CHE	SS	2020	cjw279
Olena Vatamaniuk	SIPS (SCS)	CALS	LS	2021	okv2
Chris Hernandez (co-Chair)	MAE & BME	ENG	LS	2021	cjh275
Renata Ivanek	Pop Med	VET	LS	2022	ri25
Cedric Feschotte	MBG	CALS	LS	2022	cf458
Kyle Lancaster	Chemistry	CAS	PS	2022	kml236
Sylvia Lee	MBG	CAS	LS	2022	ssl29
Praveen Sethupathy	Biomedical Sciences	CVM	LS	2022	pr46

\* LS = Life Sciences      PS = Physical Sciences/Engineering      SS = Social Sciences

**Ex officio non-voting members:** Emmanuel Giannelis, Carmel Lee

**Administrative Management:** Gayle Fagan and Liz Diaz



**Review Process:**

- The RAC is categorized into two disciplinary groups: **LS** and **PS**. Limited submissions can typically be categorized as: Life science, Physical science/engineering, or Multidisciplinary. All limited submissions competitions are reviewed by all committee members.
- All RAC members reserve every Monday from 3-4pm on their calendars for possible RAC meetings.
- RAC members are asked ahead of a scheduled review to note any conflicts of interest with pending applications. If a COI is present, the RAC member may provide comments during a RAC meeting but does not rank or formally review the application.
- The RD team assigns applications for review via IR. RAC members are usually given 2-3 weeks to review, unless there is an urgent need for review due to tight sponsor deadlines.
- RD compiles the reviews and rankings into one spreadsheet ahead of the proposed RAC meeting, and prepares a synopsis outlining the basic competition requirements, and previous nominees and reviewer feedback. The RAC Chair and RD consult to determine if a meeting is required based on the rankings.
- The RAC Chair runs the meeting, with input on specific programs from the Associate Director of Research Development, Carmel Lee, and when applicable, Carla Ingrando, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations. The RAC Chair solicits comments about the applications from RAC members, and after discussion a vote is called.
- Following the meeting, the Associate Director of Research Development collates feedback into a summary for each applicant, and if necessary, consults with the RAC Chair. RAC decisions are communicated to each applicant via IR, and includes a summary of reviewer feedback and, for those selected as Cornell nominees, next steps in the submission process.

**Attached files:**

Excel sheet data on applications for FY 2019-2020.

Cc: Emmanuel Giannelis, Mary-Margaret Klempa, Carmel Lee, Gayle Fagan, Liz Diaz, and Carla Ingrando.