USF Research Council

Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2024

Present: John Adams (Past Chair), Ponrathi Athilingam, Kelli Barr, Feng Cheng, Elizabeth Hadley, Ganesh Halade, Richard Heller (Chair), James Leahy, Mark Luther, Kristian Lynch, Taryn Sabia, Emily Shaffer-Hudkins, Kristina Schmidt, David Simmons (Vice-Chair), Marilyn Stern, Jenny Qin

Absent: Feng Cheng, Kersuze Simeon-Jones

Also Attending: Eddie Aikins, Keith Anderson, Judi Dorn, Michel Ferrell, Caroline Fultz-Carver, John Johnson, Sandy Justice (Research Council Liaison), Eric Kern, Tina Lucas, Timothy Mays, Mark McLaughlin, Cerise Mullins, Ben Shnitser, Jorge Rodriguez, Sylvia Thomas, Stephanie Wise

Call to Order
Dr. Richard Heller (Chair), called the meeting of the USF Research Council to order at 10:45 p.m. on January 22, 2024, in-person at the VP of Research Multi-Purpose Room and via Microsoft Teams.

Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting
The December 4, 2023, minutes were approved as presented.

Foreign Influence and USF Researchers – Continued Discussion
Research Council welcomed guests Craig Dawson, General Counsel; Regulatory Affairs; Michel Ferrell, Assistant Vice President, HR; Caroline Fultz-Carver, Chief Compliance Officer, Compliance & Ethics; Jorge Rodriquez, Foreign Influence Compliance Officer; Timothy Mays, General Counsel, and Stephanie Wise, Director, Talent Acquisition.

Discussion of impact of new law on hiring practices and background checks. Caroline explained the process for handling foreign influence in hiring decisions, including the use of a flowchart to determine when an enhanced background check is necessary. In the process of adding language to the application for background checks.
All applicants in research support positions will be getting the foreign influence screening and will be part of the application process. If students are not coming into a research support position, foreign influence screening is not needed. Suggest using a Qualtrics survey to identify potential RA candidates early in the application process.

Seeking written USCIS guidance on foreign principals and F1 visas, for clarity on intent to seek US citizenship. Should have a response by the end of the month. A conditional offer of employment to get a visa, requested by an outside council. The Research Council requested a flow chart on what the steps and conditions to be taken to make job offers to hire a foreign principal. Flow charts need to be disseminated to faculty to clarify foreign influence process for foreign principal. What constitutes an agreement needs to be a written agreement statement of a mutual agreement.

The Research Council requests a foreign influence committee to provide a foreign influence internal policy for faculty as soon as possible. Suggested that Dr. Heller, Dr. Simmons along with three department chairs meet to provide HR with detailed hypothetical examples and FAQs to HR. Also, a list of terms and definitions, with examples of potential situations. The Research Council will review the flow chart and policy to provide input on student admissions and hiring (recruiting challenges) to HR, to provide comments on policy prior to the General Council meeting which will be on February 12, 2024. Overall foreign influence policy, posted for comment for 30 days from General Council, timeline for early April.

Human Resources and Compliance, invited to a later meeting to continue discussion.

Other Business

Dr. Heller updated the Research Council on the Research Development Institute with new positions. Invited Council members to serve on the search committee, to provide input from faculty for upcoming positions. To help cross discipline and colleges to go after large scale grants.

Flow charts presented at the meeting.

How to Determine if Foreign Influence Screening or BOG Preapproval is Required for a New Hire
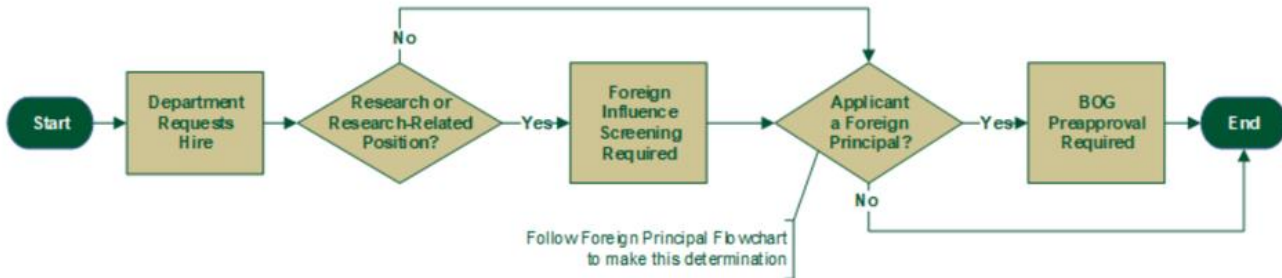
How to Determine if a New Hire is a Foreign Principal
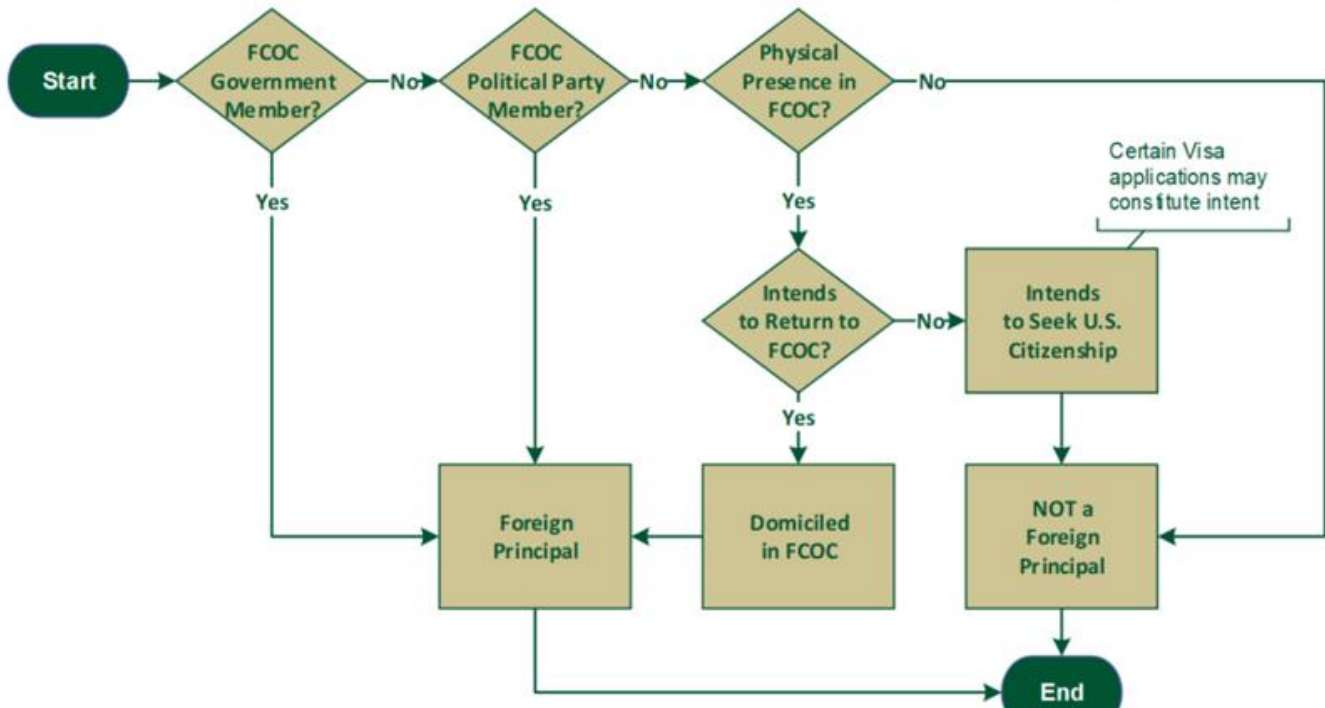
Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:20p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting scheduled for Monday, February 5, 2024.