

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 17 September 2015
Room 204 (MLK), Bernhard Center

Members present: Osama Abudayyeh, Gary Atkins, Bob Bensley (for Jessaca Spybrook), Steve Bertman, Beth Beaudin-Seiler (for Lori Brown), Christina Byrd-Jacobs (for Susan Stapleton, until her arrival), Sharon Carlson, Paul Ciccantell, Kaitlyn Cichocki-Goss, Chris Coryn, Robin Criter, Martha Councill-Vargas, Rick Gershon, Daniel Litynski, Duke Leingpibul (for Muhammad Razi), Shellie Mosher (for Patti Van Walbeck), David Rudge, Bade Shrestha (for Muralidhar Ghantasala), Paul Solomon (for Cat Crotchett), Susan Stapleton, Susan Steuer, Andre Venter, Udaya Wagle.

Also present: Paul Kohler, Associate Vice President for Research

Council Chair Paul Ciccantell called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

Procedural Items

Acceptance of the Agenda

The Research Misconduct Policy and Procedure was added as a third item of new business.

A motion was made by Bertman, seconded by Solomon, to amend the agenda to add proposed changes to WMU's research misconduct policy. The amended agenda was accepted.

Approval of Minutes of 11 June 2015

A motion was made by Carlson, seconded by Bertman, to approve the minutes of the 11 June meeting. Motion carried.

New Business

Welcome New Members and Substitutes

Chair Ciccantell introduced and welcomed the two new student members from the Graduate Student Association, Gary Atkins and Kaitlyn Cichocki-Goss, and well as the following substitutes:

- Paul Solomon (for Cat Crotchett) fall semester
- Bade Shrestha (for Muralidhar Ghantasala) fall semester
- Duke Leingpibul (for Muhammad Razi) fall semester
- Bob Bensley (for Jessaca Spybrook) for AY 2015-16.

Discussion / Information Items

There were none.

New Business

Funding Allocation for 2015-2016

Paula Kohler distributed the summary report (2009-Spring 2015) of Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund Allocations and Expenditures and explained the process by which the funding levels for various parts of the program are awarded. Last year, we overspent in travel, but underspent by 30% for Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award and 10% for Support for Faculty Scholar Award. Funds from last year carry over, though rules require any remaining travel funds to remain in the travel category.

The Office of the Vice President for Research recommends decreasing the FRACAA funds and adding most of the carry forward to travel. The office also advocates increasing the per trip amount slightly to \$850 (from \$800). This would allow funding of the same number of trips as last year.

Discussion of the amount of funds available and how to increase the level of funding followed. Several reasons for decreased applications were cited, including fewer early-career faculty on campus, fewer faculty members overall and the inadequacy of funds to cover travel needs or real research expenses. Kohler argued that recruiting for applicants should be done by individuals from the council in the areas they represent. Solomon suggested that the application might be streamlined and encouragement from the dean level would be helpful. He also noted that the Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works is not high enough to help in some fields, such as his work in photography, while others may find the funding quite generous. Rudge advocates the reallocation of funds and raising the funding levels in SFSA.

A decision needs to be reached at this meeting because the first round of SFSA applications will be due at the end of September, prior to the next meeting. Abudayyeh proposed acceptance of the OVPR proposal for the initial allocation. Rudge recommended that the funding levels per award for SFSA be increased. Kohler noted that this funding level was negotiated through the Faculty Senate and this will be revisited and a new recommendation developed during the year's meetings. Rudge expressed skepticism based upon the lack of action upon last year's proposal. Rudge asked why RPC can determine a travel award level, but not the level of other funds. Kohler agreed that is was inconsistent, and this could be addressed in policy this year and described the history of these funds. Rudge spoke to the need for a change to meet the charges of the council to promote an environment which promotes research.

Councill-Vargas moved that \$50,000 be moved from FRACAA, to supplement SFSA by \$20,000, Faculty Research Travel Fund by \$20,000 and PPP&E by \$10,000. Rudge seconded. Because award amounts cannot be increased without a Memorandum of Action, there was extensive discussion of the history of these programs and how the money has normally been distributed. Bertman spoke to the need for FRACAA to remain well-funded to increase external grant applications. Abudayyeh recommended we add more money to travel and PPP&E, because we can increase the level of award. Bensley argued that we should increase the award levels and increase the amount being awarded with PPP&E at \$30,000 with a maximum \$1000 award and travel to \$260,000 at \$900.

A final friendly amendment from Bensley with contributions from others:

- FRACAA funded at \$180,000
- SFSA \$58,194
- Travel \$260,000 with a maximum award of \$900
- PPP&E \$30,000 with a maximum award of \$1000

OVPR will need to keep a close eye on the fund levels to make sure things do not go over because there is no money to absorb an overage, according to Kohler.

Rudge argued that there is a strategic goal in seeing these funds used for research as they should be, and reallocation will allow this.

Amendment passed.

Discussion of 2015-16 Council Charges

Abudayyeh described the nine charges. He noted that diversity and inclusion has been added to the charge of each council. Some charges can be closed out from last year.

1. *Address any continuing or outstanding issues or initiatives as deemed necessary by the council. To the extent possible conclude any outstanding initiative by producing a memorandum of action, report or resolution.* #1 is a continuing charge.
2. *Monitor the implementation of the University Policy on Data Collection through Surveys.* #2 – RPC member Chris Coryn and Whitney DeCamp (non-RPC member) will serve on this committee, as will Kohler.
3. *Conduct yearly review of the state of the research ethics policies and procedures in collaboration with the vice president for research. Initiate changes or additions where appropriate.* #3 is a continuing charge.
4. *Conduct a review of the FRACAA program with the goal of increasing its utilization by faculty, including investigating strategies to increase the number of quality proposals submitted across all disciplines.* #4 – Ciccantell requested volunteers to serve on a FRACAA committee to work on these issues, to discover why applications are down. Bertman anticipates two meetings before January. Solomon volunteered to find someone from Fine Arts. Bertman is willing to chair.
5. *Develop consistent external submission language related to FRACAA awards and recommend changes as deemed necessary to ensure the FRACAA funding program is consistent with the purpose of the program and is available to faculty from all disciplines.* #5 – Councell-Vargas, Venter and Rudge volunteered.
6. *Continue review of Support for Faculty Scholar Award proposals and revise the guidelines and review process to encourage faculty from all disciplines to submit quality proposals.* #6 – Venter proposed that there is inadequate enthusiasm for change. Abudayyeh argued that this might include the issue of increasing the level of SFSA which was discussed

earlier. The next meeting to review the applications is October 8. Kohler discussed timing of getting materials to individuals for review. Steuer noted that this is a proposed date for candidates for dean of the Libraries and that she and Carlson will not be able to attend, nor will they be able to find substitutes. Kohler argued for speed and suggested that input could be provided ahead of time, for those who could not attend. The discussion resumed about an MOA to raise the award amount. Kohler returned to the issue of reviewing the applications and would like to provide training to ensure consistency. Ciccantell felt that training was not necessary, but he will not oppose or require it. Kohler read much of the policy for SFSA screening aloud until it was determined that SFSA decisions could not be delayed until the November meeting. Only one committee member need be from RPC for this committee to go forward; others can be recruited from outside.

7. *Develop a policy for providing official formal credit to those with dual appointments or who serve as coPIs on externally funded research project who's PIs are housed in other University units.* #7 – Kohler addressed this charge, noting that these processes should be discussed prior to submission among partners. She recommends flexibility on such issues because of the individuality of each situation. Rudge described the problem of a dual-appointment faculty member who has two chairs fighting for indirect costs from her projects. Rudge advocates a policy which decides this at the time of hire for dual appointments and a number of policies which address different types of situations. Litynski argues that this is a management problem, not a policy problem, which should be addressed at the dean and provost level. Ciccantell argues that this is a concern from the faculty perspective and it is the charge of this council to deal with it as a faculty concern. Litynski passed out external funding awards and proceeded to discuss the charts in brief. Ciccantell asked for volunteers for a subcommittee. Rudge volunteered and Ciccantell will recruit for other positions.
8. *Develop a procedure for the regular review of University policies related to research by the RPC and a schedule for conducting these regular reviews on a five-year rotating basis.* #8 – A procedure for the regular review of University policies related to research by RPC and a schedule for conducting these regular reviews on a five-year rotating basis needs to be developed. Kohler will chair. Carlson volunteered to serve. Additional members may be recruited.
9. *Investigate the obstacles to research and creative activities from the perspective of the faculty and consider diversity and inclusion issues as they relate to the role of RPC.* #9 – Several members found this charge unclear, particularly in assuming a link between the first and second parts of the charge. Ciccantell will take the lead on this. Abudayyeh said that the issue of diversity and inclusion has been added to the charge of each Faculty Senate council.

Proposed Changes to WMU's Research Misconduct Policy

Kohler led a discussion of the materials she had sent Tuesday evening for review. A local high school student with an interest in research ethics interned and helped review this policy in concordance with policies at other universities and links to federal guidelines. With the assistance of additional parties, a report was issued and this was used to revise this draft. Leingpibul asked about the frequency with which this policy was employed. Kohler and Litynski said that there are 6 to 8 allegations per year, but many do not merit further investigation. These can include plagiarism, falsification, and Human Subjects Institutional Review Board protocol issues; mismanagement of funds has been removed because there are other means to address this. Allegations can come from within or outside WMU. Drudge asked about ambiguity in the charges. Bertman noted that there is a conflict of interest policy, but conflict of interest can be construed as misconduct and questioned if it should be included on the list as a recognized form of misconduct. Some charges need to be addressed outside the University's purview, such as violations of federal law. Ciccantell noted that the changes were small and might not reflect issues related to changes in technology. Kohler explained the rationale for the changes, which was to create a clearer document rather than a change in policy and that this looks very much like what other universities are doing. Ciccantell also asked about legal representation for the accused, which is neither prohibited nor required. This still needs to go before WMU legal counsel. Ciccantell argues that the definition of falsification does not make sense. There are also unclear statements about the timelines and Ciccantell argues that there should be internal consistency. He also noted that the inquiry committee and constitutional investigative committee can be the same people, so this appears to be double jeopardy. Updates and revisions will come back to the council for approval.

Reports

Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell

Ciccantell sent his report via email to save time.

Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski

Litynski passed out material about submissions and awards for research. He specifically described the award from the Nationwide Network for Manufacturing Innovation – NNMI – in some detail. He plans to send results of the faculty survey to RPC before next meeting. He mentioned the research magazine. Discovery experts is in the process of being upgraded.

Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton

Online ethics training has begun for all graduate students. All are enrolled in the Elearning shell and must complete the training during the fall semester.

Continued/Old Business

There is none.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Solomon, seconded by Leingpibul, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on October 8 in this same location, but hopefully with more tables, as the council members were crowded.

Susan Steuer
Secretary