

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 12 November 2015

Room 204 (Martin Luther King), Bernhard Center

Members present: Gary Atkins, Bob Bensley (for Jessaca Spybrook), Steve Bertman, Lori Brown, Sharon Carlson, Paul Ciccantell, Robin Criter, Martha Councell-Vargas, Duke Leingpibul (for Muhammad Razi), David Rudge, Paul Solomon (for Cat Crotchett), Susan Stapleton, Susan Steuer, Patti Van Walbeck, Andre Venter, Udaya Wagle.

Absent: Osama Abudayyeh, Chris Coryn, Daniel Litynski, Bade Shrestha (for Muralidhar Ghantasala)

Council Chair Paul Ciccantell called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.

Procedural Items

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Rudge, seconded by Bertman, to accept the agenda with the amendment that Dean Stapleton's report be moved forward so she can leave. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of 8 October 2015

Rudge moved, supported by Carlson, to approve the minutes of the 8 October meeting. Motion carried.

Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton

First round of travel and research grants has gone through. Research – 14 applicants, 8 awards. Travel – 21 applications and 13 funded for a total of about \$15,000.

Three-minute thesis competitions are national and international and we have begun offering these for graduate students to develop better communication about their scholarship to a lay audience. Twelve competed in the fall round and another competition is planned for spring. There will be a Midwest competition this spring and one individual will be chosen to go from the two sets of competition winners. This is a first for WMU and we had students from the humanities as well as the sciences and some guest presenters from the medical school.

Our graduate students' organization was selected as the member of the year this year and last year was the chapter of the year. Three of our members have served on the national board during the last year.

Ciccantell noted the strength of the applications received and encouraged faculty to remind their students to apply and help them develop this kind of application for a non-specialist audience. Stapleton noted that the research is \$700 and travel is \$1000 with availability of supplements for international projects. Students at the M.A. and Ph.D. level can apply.

Discussion / Information Items

None.

New Business

MOA-15/09 The Adoption of a University-Wide Internationalization Initiative

The RPC has been asked to review this Memorandum of Action to see if there were potential problems prior to its approval by the entire Faculty Senate. The only area which pertains to RPC is the encouragement of international grants. There is some concern about how international curriculum should be determined. It will be very difficult to determine, in some fields, what international content is. "How do you operationalize this in specific disciplines?" The Faculty Senate meeting discussed this in great detail, because of the lack of specificity. Pursuing international collaboration opportunities for research might be included in bullet point 6. Should the Office of the Vice President for Research be involved in tracking these international individual grants? Concern about setting up for international visitors (faculty) and providing a seamless hospitality and support for collaborators so they can comfortably work and network. Identifying obstacles for going abroad and bringing visitors in is an important part of the process. The University needs to better support study abroad programs by supporting the instructors in administering the courses and providing realistic ideas about the operations. Faculty would like to see winners of prestigious awards celebrated and offer public presentations related to teaching. Graduate students are offered help in applying for things like Fulbrights through Michele Metro-Roland in the Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

There is a potential role for RPC in facilitating more international research, but do we wish to get heavily involved. It was recommended we look at III. 2. 4.1 bullet which also pertains to research. This seems to be too heavily focused toward teaching and less focused upon research, but this would require further study, perhaps with a graduate student dedicated to the purpose. Should this be an added criteria for grants such as Support for Faculty Scholar Award and Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award? Language for this would need to be defined.

It was suggested that this issue falls under an issue which was tabled last June regarding how externally funded research is defined, particularly for international research.

A motion was made that we reconsider the motion of the subcommittee for the FRACAA (which currently carries three conditions for acceptance, including submission of a final report, presentation of a poster for poster day and submission of a research proposal to an external funding agency as defined in the

guidelines). Explanations were provided for newer members. The majority agreed to put this back on the table for discussion today. The previous proposal was summarized as stating that the wording be changed to “sources outside the University” as the requirement for awarding the FRACAA. It would be the responsibility of the individual researcher to prove that they did submit a grant and perhaps this should be included with the final report, but there is a large window between the final report and the end of the time when the external application should be made. The issue under discussion is the definition of external funding outside of the sciences. The committee had recommended in June that the definition of external funding be opened up so that some types of research are not privileged over other types of research.

It was moved by Venter and seconded by Bensley that the committee that had been working on this will reconvene to come to the December meeting with a revised proposal. Motion carried.

RPC also requested a report on the results of last year’s survey by OVPR on research.

No final recommendation was made by RPC regarding the Internationalization MOA; RPC will discuss this issue again in December.

Reports

Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell

Outcomes from the academic program review: 11 programs with 8 students will be eliminated. Those which require restructuring should be actively working on their programs.

The Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Civility Committee and Ad Hoc Plagiarism Committee will be putting forward proposals soon.

Budget planning models are being developed.

Enrollment is down 535 students; \$5.35 million deficit.

General Education revisions will be proposed in early spring and will affect many academic units.

Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski

Absent; no report.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on December 10 in this same location.

Susan Steuer
Secretary