

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 14 April 2016
President's Dining Room, Bernhard Center

Members present: Osama Abudayyeh, Onur Arugaslan, Steve Bertman, Lori Brown, Sharon Carlson, Paul Ciccantell, Martha Councell-Vargas, Robin Criter, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Kate Hibbard-Gibbons, Daniel Litynski, David Rudge, Susan Stapleton, Susan Steuer, Patti Van Walbeck, Andre Venter.
Members absent: Bob Bensley, Kaitlyn Cichocki-Goss, Chris Coryn, Gary Atkins

Council Chair Paul Ciccantell called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Procedural Items

Acceptance of the Agenda

The agenda was amended by the withdrawal of item 1 (Support for Faculty Scholar Award review) and the addition of voting on the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award recommendations and discussion of security committee. A motion was made by Carlson, seconded by Bertman, to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of 11 February 2016

Rudge moved, supported by Carlson, to approve the minutes of the 11 February meeting with amendments. Motion carried.

New Business

Security Committee: Abudayyah noted that there is a security committee to deal with data security and management requirements which is in the process of being formed. He believes that representatives of RPC and the Academic and Information Technology Council should be included. Abudayyah recommended that the chairs may be asked to serve or to nominate members.

Continued/Old Business

*Progress Report on Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award Utilization
(Charge 4) – Steve Bertman*

Bertman reported on the FRACAA applications and committee decisions. There were 39 applications received this year and 20 were recommended for funding. Bertman distributed information about the applications and awards analyzed by methodology and by college, which included a graph illustrating the history of applications and awards. Recommendations for funding (meritorious work) exceed the number which can be funded (18) with remaining allocations.

Bertman requested that any rollover funds be allocated to fund the full roster of recommended projects. Discussion followed regarding the merits of reallocating funds, or spending funds from next year. The greatest overage is in the Faculty Research Travel Fund, and Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works. Venter asked if travel funding should become more competitive or selective to prioritize prestigious conferences or more substantive work. Ciccantell said that this might be a charge for next year. It was questioned whether this would result in less funding for research or show the need for more. Discussion included some history of the FRACAA and SFSA programs. Bertman noted that an assessment is underway to see if FRACAA is accomplishing its goals, which should inform future decisions. Bertman said that overall these were of higher quality than other years. Bertman moved to support the recommended funding for the 20 proposals \$197,465 which exceeds the allocation. Rudge seconded. Venter called the question. The motion passed with two abstentions.

*Charge 9: Obstacles to Research and Creative Activities Discussion –
Paul Ciccantell*

Ciccantell feels that we have addressed most of our charges this year, but would like to look at ways we could study this in the future. Rudge noted that the recent Hannover survey was under analyzed and would like to have some assessment of the comments. Rudge wonders if there is a need not being met for certain fields. There are organizational and cultural issues about encouragement and time for these activities within departments. Litynski touted the value of Discovery Experts for understanding where we are. Stapleton noted that recent Carnegie evaluations provide comparison data with other institutions. Ciccantell argued that we need to find ways to reward and encourage individuals who feel somewhat overwhelmed. More information on the history of the Office of the Vice President for Research and issues of which the council is not aware would be desirable. Rudge noted that greater undergraduate involvement in research should become a more natural part of instruction. Criter noted that better communication to untenured assistant professors in particular areas would be helpful. Rudge asked about further orientation sessions for new faculty and Litynski said that sessions are available for everyone. Bertman argued that some funds could be earmarked for new faculty. Stapleton noted that this may be in violation of the AAUP contract. Councell –Vargas noted that the Research Development Assistance program was very helpful to her in developing proposals. There was discussion of developing learning communities to create collaboration among those who are not successful in getting funds internally. We need to find actionable items for these goals.

Discussion / Information Items

None.

Reports

Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell

Dr. Dale Vondre, from the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, is scheduled to come for our May meeting, which is our last meeting of the year.

The Faculty Senate will consider all Memoranda of Action which we might put forward. They will go to the Executive Board and to the full Senate.

Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski

Litynski passed around the strategic plan which was recently approved by the Board of Trustees to ask the members to think about its implications for the council. He highlighted the rolls of centers and institutes in seeking external funding and disseminating research.

Litynski toured the Medical School and met with the associate dean for research and noted that some research faculty should be coming in this fall. Questions were raised about collaboration. Van Walbeck noted that in order to avoid certain issues with the division of the schools, currently, WMed can subcontract WMU, and vice versa. The Southwest Michigan Innovation Center is now under WMed.

Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton

Research and Creative Activities Poster and Performance Day was held today. Seventeen awards were given among 43 posters and one performance. Stapleton believes the celebration of research will contribute to a culture of research. Rudge is concerned about the limits upon departmental submissions. Stapleton directed Rudge to the committee to provide feedback. April 28 will be the honors convocation for research and teaching awards for graduate students. She discussed several opportunities for graduate students to compete for national awards. She is also trying to promote growth in accelerated master's programs.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Rudge, seconded by Venter, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on May 19 in Room 204 (MLK Room), Bernhard Center.

Susan Steuer
Secretary