

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE**

**RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 8 October 2009**

Members present: Brooks Applegate, Carla Chase (for Mary Ann Stark), Van Cooley, Tim Greene, Greg Laing, Lin Foulk, Paula Kohler, Betty McCain (for Jan Van Der Kley), Carrie Leatherman, Muralidhar Ghantasala (for Tianshu Liu), Lisa Minnick, Lewis Pyenson, Vladimir Risukhin, Alan Wuosmaa, Steven Ziebarth.

Guest: Jim Gilchrist, vice provost for academic operations and chief information officer

Also present: Walter Worthy, Research and Sponsored Programs

Chair Steven Ziebarth called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

A motion was made by Applegate and seconded by Risukhin to accept the agenda. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes of 17 September 2009

A motion was made by Applegate and seconded by Leatherman to approve the minutes of 17 September 2009. Motion passed.

Reports of Officers

Office of the Associate Vice President for Research—Paula Kohler

Between September 1 and October 8, forty-seven proposals were submitted through the Office of the Vice President for Research (\$23.6 million). Twenty-six were approved (\$5.7 million in external funding). WMU received \$350,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) awards, which was funded by stimulus dollars. Kohler announced that she just returned from meeting with members of congress in Washington, D.C. to discuss WMU projects. She distributed a brochure on Alternative and Renewable Energy Research to the RPC. These brochures, which highlight activities and niches of particular departments or projects, can be made for other departments and her office can use these to distribute to constituencies. Kohler requested ideas for future brochures.

Graduate College Office—Lewis Pyenson

Seventy-five graduate students filed for audit for doctoral degrees in December and that has put a strain on graduate college staff to accommodate that many

applications. The Graduate College is hosting an open house on October 22, which is intended for WMU undergraduates to encourage them to pursue graduate study at WMU. Last year over 200 students attended this open house and he is expecting more this year. Pyenson also announced a meeting for graduate advisors across campus on October 9.

New Business

*Vice Provost for Academic Operations
and Chief Information Officer—James Gilchrist*

Gilchrist distributed the Office of Institutional Technology (OIT) policy on access to email addresses used for research. His office staff can create distribution lists for WMU faculty/staff, but they monitor how many messages are sent to students because the students see most survey/research requests as junk mail and spam. His office will not create distribution lists for students to use for their own research. The typical response rate for using students in research by email is only 2-5%. Portal announcements seem to do better, but the announcements must be short. OIT can construct portal announcements to cater to particular students. The Michigan law has recently changed so that OIT is now not required to release faculty/staff/student information via the Freedom of Information Act.

Gilchrist also distributed a list of university relations' standards, which outlines the criteria by which email messages might be distributed. A question was raised by Kohler regarding stolen or lost university-owned laptops. Gilchrist strongly recommended that all faculty have an encryption program installed on their university laptops. Faculty/staff should contact the OIT if a more advanced version of encryption is needed that handles larger files. Faculty/staff need to destroy immediately any files that have student social security numbers (or other sensitive student information). Kohler brought up unique research technology needs—using Google Docs files, for example—that will need to be addressed and supported by OIT. Gilchrist has said his office is aware of these needs and a business plan will be made to address these needs.

Formal membership in Internet 2, which costs WMU \$56,200 annually, will probably be cancelled. WMU employees and students shouldn't notice a difference in Internet speed even if Internet 2 is cancelled and the benefits will be retained through other means. Examples of other universities (such as the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University) were used to illustrate the consequences of the change.

Standard Business—Support for Faculty Scholar Awards

Council Chair—Steven Ziebarth

Nine proposals were submitted from these colleges: Aviation, Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Education and Human Development, and Fine Arts. Last year the guidelines and scoring form were updated, so this was the first time the new forms were used. The committee voted to fund all the proposals with one at

approximately half the amount requested. Ziebarth thanked the committee and Walt Worthy for their work. Kohler and Worthy will consider greater marketing strategies for this award to encourage more submissions in the future.

Continued Business—Reaction to the Strategic Plan

Provost Greene attended the meeting to answer questions concerning the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan. Greene said the deans were charged in April to craft a plan. The plan has gone through over 16 iterations. The president, chair and directors were invited to work on the document in August. The provost is inviting the academic community to attend forums to discuss the plan on October 13 and 30, and November 4.

Greene raised many important questions for the RPC to consider:

- Is this plan where we want the University to go?
- What are the research areas that we want to emphasize on this campus?
- What about inter-disciplinary projects?
- Talk about content of research instead of policy.

The council raised questions that were also discussed:

- Is an aim of the strategic plan to point the direction for funding allocation?
- How will these many strategies be accomplished?
- Does every strategy need to be tied to a metric for success?
- Is it practical to expect every unit to participate in research that is externally funded—should this be a focus of the University?
- How can those units that have less access to large external funding be fully recognized and appreciated in the language of the strategic plan?

These issues and questions will be discussed further at the next RPC meeting.

Conflict of Interest Policy

A plan to examine the Conflict of Interest Policy will be discussed at the next meeting.

Celebration of Research Day 2010

A Research Celebration Day chair will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Ziebarth made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lin Foulk, College of Fine Arts Representative for RPC