

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of November 12, 2009

**Members present:** Jessica Spybrook (for Brooks Applegate), Sime Curkovic, Van Cooley, Eileen Evans, Greg Laing, Lin Foulk, Betty McCain (for Jan Van Der Kley), Carrie Leatherman, Lisa Minnick, Lewis Pyenson, Vladimir Risukhin, Walter Worthy, Alan Wuosmaa. **Also present:** Walt Worthy, Research and Sponsored Programs.

Vice Chair Alan Wuosmaa called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Leatherman and seconded by Minnick to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes of 8 October 2009**

A motion was made by Pyenson and seconded by Risukhin to approve the minutes of 8 October 2009. Motion passed.

**Reports of Officers**

*Office of the Associate Vice President for Research—Walt Worthy  
(for Paula Kohler)*

Nov. 19 is the date set for applicants to apply for the position of Research and Program Officer in the Office of the Vice President for Research and applications for the congressional Earmarks programs are due Dec. 4.

The OVPR has scheduled two workshops (Dec. 7, 2009 and Jan. 15, 2010) for office coordinators. If internal funding applications propose hiring someone from outside the university to work on a project, this person needs to be hired as an independent contractor. Internal funding applicants must use the “independent contractor form,” regardless of the amount requested. [Worthy said Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works (PPP&E) applicants especially should note this change in procedure.] Worthy reported the upcoming Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award deadline, which is Dec. 4, and he encouraged the council to continue to revisit the OVPR Web site, which is constantly being updated.

*Graduate College Office—Lewis Pyenson*

Fifty doctoral students will walk in December and WMU is well on its way of achieving 100 awarded doctorates annually for the third year in a row. The graduate research and travel applications tripled this semester as a result of

extending the deadlines. Dean Pyenson reported there is a 40-50% success rate for applicants for these awards. The second round of the Gwen Frostic Doctoral Fellowships is coming up (Feb. 26, 2010), which is the biggest award given on campus for doctoral students.

Starting Jan. 3, the National Science Foundation is requiring all applicants and their institutions to have a plan in place to train students in research ethics. The Graduate College is taking a lead in implementing this for students, faculty and staff. The Graduate College has initiated discussions with OVPR concerning this new requirement. Pyenson will circulate a document among the RPC members that outlines more specifically this change. This training pertains to all staff, undergraduate students, graduate students and post docs. Also, Pyenson suggested the usefulness of a program of graduate-student training for “Preparing Future Faculty” which could include ethics training as well as other training that could prepare students for future academic careers.

*Council Vice Chair—Alan Wuosmaa (for Chair Steven Ziebarth)*

No report.

**Continued Business**

*Upcoming Discussion with Dr. Daniel Litynski*

RPC discussed the upcoming interview with OVPR candidate Dr. Daniel Litynski, which will take place Nov. 17, from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Bernhard Center’s Brown and Gold Room. Cooley, who represents the Faculty Senate Executive Board, clarified the collaboration between the Faculty Senate and RPC in organizing this event. A member of RPC requested that the council receive Dr. Litynski’s curriculum vita. It is unclear what is the role of RPC at this event—as host or as an advising body—and if RPC should create a statement following the interview (and if so, to whom it should be sent). Cooley will seek clarification and communicate this to RPC. Ziebarth will chair the meeting. Pyenson suggested it might be helpful for Ziebarth (or someone else) to give a brief history of the RPC to Dr. Litynski at some point during the interview.

*Conflict of Interest Policy*

Wuosmaa distributed WMU’s Conflict of Interest Policy for the council to examine. Not only should the policy itself be examined, but the council should consider how to make faculty better aware of the policy and how to enforce it. Worthy reported the OVPR staff has been charged with looking at Conflict of Interest policies at fifteen other universities for comparison. WMU’s policy will be discussed by the council at the next meeting.

*Celebration of Research Day 2010*

A chair needs to be identified for next semester’s Celebration of Research Day. Discussions have been made with previous chair Sue Stapleton to continue to

serve as chair of the event for the third time. Evans encouraged the council to identify a potential chair for next year who could apprentice with Stapleton at the 2010 Research Day in preparation for the 2011 event.

### *Reaction to the Strategic Plan, Part II*

Wuosmaa asked what, if any, formal response should RPC make to the strategic plan. To achieve the goals set out in the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, additional resources will need to be made towards research and towards helping faculty successfully apply for grants and external funds. There is a strong concern about how the plan will be used—specific concerns raised include rewarding programs that have the opportunity and are successful at applying for major external awards or determining additional faculty lines based on the number of dollars brought in externally. Other criteria should be used to determine excellence in research besides external dollars brought in to the university. There was confusion amongst the council members concerning the current and former Carnegie classification of WMU and there was concern that the strategic plan was demoting WMU's research goals. Evans clarified that Carnegie recently changed the specific terms for classification from "research-intensive" and "extensive" to "very high" and "high." WMU is in the second tier from the top, "high".

The council would like a definition of the term "research" as it is used throughout the strategic plan. Research is more than just securing grant money; the plan needs to better address why research is important to a great university. Wuosmaa asked if RPC should create a formal response for the provost. Risukhin recommended that, instead, members of RPC should encourage colleagues in their respective departments to send comments to Provost Greene if they have not already done so. Pyenson offered to sponsor a discussion on crafting a statement about the definition of research and Wuosmaa offered that either he or Ziebarth (chair) will send a message to invite members of the council to meet to accomplish this task in the next two weeks.

### **New Business**

No new business.

### **Adjournment**

Foulk made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Minnick. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

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