

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of 9 April 2015

**Members present:** Osama Abudayyeh, Michele Anderson, Steve Bertman, Cat Crotchett, Paul Ciccantell, Martha Councell-Vargas, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Michael Lindquist, Dan Litynski, Muhammad Razi, David Rudge, Joe Kretoivics (for Jessaca Spybrook), Susan Stapleton, Andre Venter, Udaya Wagle, Geoff Whitehurst (for Lori Brown), Betty McKain (for Patti VanWalbeck).

**Absent without substitution:** Susan Steuer.

**Also present:** Paula Kohler, Associate Vice President for Research.

Council Chair Paul Ciccantell called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

**Procedural Items**

*Acceptance of the Agenda*

A motion was made and seconded to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

*Approval of Minutes of 5 March 2015*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 5 March meeting. Motion carried.

**New Business**

*Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award Screening Committee  
– Steve Bertman*

Bertman reported on the FRACAA Screening Committee's recommendations for funding and passed out the attached report. A total of 25 proposals were submitted (one of which was later withdrawn). Of the 24 remaining, 16 are recommended for funding, for a total of \$158,399.

Bertman made a motion we accept the screening committee's recommendation. This was seconded by Rudge and passed unanimously.

Bertman also drew attention to a perceived downward trend in the number of FRACAA applications submitted over the past fifteen years. This is particularly surprising when one considers the acceptance rate for this award is 67%. He noted the committee strongly believes that applications must meet a certain minimal standard to be funded, and that the primary reasons for why proposals are rejected has to do with poor ideas, poor implementation strategies or the screening committee simply cannot make sense of the proposal. Rudge pointed out this trend undermines our ability to ask the president for more internal funding. The group discussed the merits of perhaps raising the limit on FRACAA awards

from \$10,000 to a higher amount. Bertman suggested we should find out why people are reluctant to apply for internal funding.

We discussed using a survey of faculty. Rudge motioned that a subcommittee be formed to determine our information needs, i.e. what information should be solicited in the survey. This was seconded by Bertman, who agreed to consider serving as chair. Abudayyeh, Ghantasala, Rudge, and Wagle also agreed to serve on this committee.

**Continued/Old Business**

*Committee to Consider Using Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award  
Rubric for the Support for Faculty Scholar Award Rubric – David Rudge,  
Muralidhar Ghantasala, Andre Venter*

Venter reported on the results of the subcommittee's deliberations regarding how to streamline the current rubric used to evaluate proposals, and that this necessitated additional changes to two associated documents. Kohler raised concerns that the proposed revisions represented a change in the purpose of the SFSA as stated in its Memorandum of Action to align it more closely with the FRACAA. She pointed out that whereas the FRACAA was intended to model the proposal process we associate with external funding, the SFSA has a much different purpose- proposals to the latter are intended to be shorter, more expedited, and evaluated more along the lines of a genius grant than methodological rigor. Venter and other members of the committee pointed out that several of the changes introduced were reflective of our experiences in how SFSA proposals are reviewed by the committee, and in particular, to encourage applicants to more adequately defend those aspects of proposals that are at issue during the review process. Rudge suggested the issue be returned back to the committee, perhaps with the idea of asking review teams to engage in a more holistic approach to how proposals are evaluated.

*Committee on FRACAA External Funding Requirement*

Litynski agreed to pass the minutes of the committee along with a request for information on to associate deans of other units that might be affected by the proposed change.

*Planning for Research and Creative Activities Day – Susan Steuer*

Ciccantell reported that he did get back to Graduate Studies Council Chair Mark Wheeler regarding our concern about the number of poster proposals per unit being limited to two. He was informed it was too late to change the policy. Aside from this, the organization and planning for the event seems to be going well. Michael Lindquist, our graduate student representative, reported that the Graduate Student Association is donating \$3000 towards the awards.

## **Reports**

*Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell*

Ciccantell and Rudge met with the Board for the University's Center for the Humanities on March 20. In addition to discussing the FRACAA outside funding requirement, Ciccantell also used this meeting to solicit suggestions on other things the RPC could do to help scholars in the humanities. He will share the specifics of their suggestions at our next RPC meeting.

*Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski*

Litynski told us that his office had just completed a survey of faculty on external funding. There were 272 responses obtained and a preliminary examination suggests they are demographically representative of scholars at WMU. The results will be posted.

Kohler drew our attention to a potential deficit in the amount of money available to cover commitments associated with the Faculty Research and Travel Fund. Rudge motioned that excess money associated with the FRACAA, SFSA and Publication of Papers and Exhibitions of Creative Works (PPPE) be used to cover this deficit. Crockett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton*

Stapleton reminded us of an upcoming deadline for graduate students seeking travel reimbursement. She also mentioned an upcoming reception to publicly honor graduate students who had won department and University-wide teaching and research awards. It will be held on April 30, 2015 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the West Ballroom of the Bernhard Center.

## **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

David Rudge  
Acting Secretary

## FRACAA Screening Committee Report to Research Policies Council

April 9, 2015

Steve Bertman, Chair

The FRACAA Screening Committee met on March 26 to discuss, rank, and recommend proposals for funding for the FY 2015-2016 applications. The committee consisted of 18 individuals, each assigned to one of five sub-panels: 3 Quantitative Sciences, 2 Qualitative Scholarly, 1 Creative Arts. Each proposal was read and scored by three separate reviewers and each subpanel met to discuss the proposals before the final committee meeting. After screening by OVPR for compliance with formatting guidelines there were 25 proposals that went out for review, but one was retracted by the proposer for personal reasons. 24 proposals were ranked by the committee.

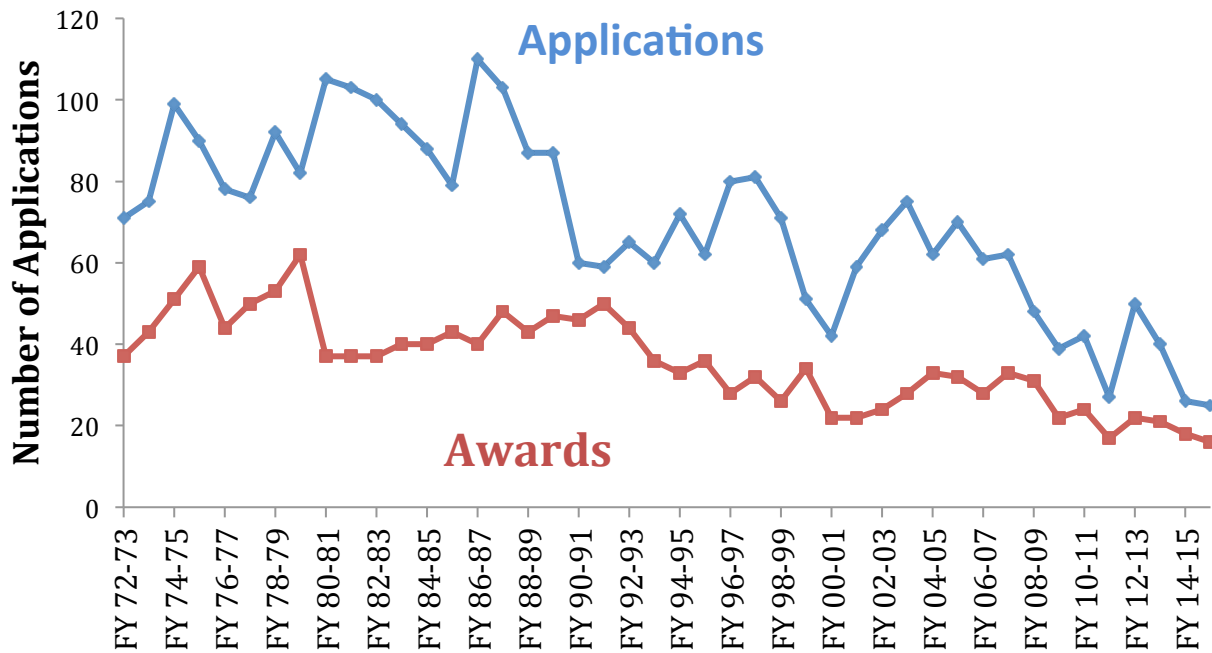
Each proposal was scored according to the rubric in the published guidelines and average scores were standardized to account for any potential reviewer biases. The committee unanimously recommended the top 16 proposals for funding based on a composite ranking. These recommendations represent a 67% success rate.

<b>Total funding requested</b>	<b>\$158,399</b>
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<b>Breakdown by Methodology</b>	<b>Submitted</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
Quantitative Sciences	14	7
Qualitative Scholarly	8	6
Creative Arts	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>

<b>Breakdown by College</b>	<b>Submitted</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Reviewers</b>
Arts and Sciences	11	8	7
Aviation	1	0	0
Haworth College of Business	0	0	1
Education	3	1	3
Engineering and Applied Sciences	5	3	2
Fine Arts	3	3	2
Health and Human Services	1	0	3
VP for Academic Affairs/Provost	0	0	0
VP for Student Affairs	0	0	0
University Libraries	1	1	0

# FRACAA Applications



## Average FRACAA Award Amount

