

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of 8 September 2016  
Room 204 (MLK), Bernhard Center

**Members present:** Osama Abudayyeh, Steve Bertman, Lori Brown, Christine Byrd-Jacobs (for Susan Stapleton), Sharon Carlson, Paul Ciccantell, Chris Coryn, Robin Criter, Martha Councell-Vargas, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Daniel Litynski, Muhammad Razi, Jessaca Spybrook, Susan Steuer, Betty McKain (for Patti Van Walbeck), Andre Venter.

**Also present:** Tim Greene, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Suzan Ayers, Faculty Senate President; John Risley, Office of the Vice President for Research

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

**Procedural Items**

*Acceptance of the Agenda*

A motion was made by Bertman, seconded by Steuer, to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

*Approval of Minutes of 19 May 2016*

Coryn moved, supported by Spybrook, to approve the minutes of the 19 May meeting. Motion carried.

**New Business**

*Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs – Tim Greene*

Provost Greene was welcomed and noted that he stays on top of issues with the councils and offers to come again as desired.

He distributed draft document “Guidelines on Hiring Graduate/Undergraduate Students within Academic Affairs” which addresses issues of appropriate workloads and tasks for undergraduate and graduate students employed in academic affairs. He requested input from everyone after review. A discussion followed which covered such issues as overlap between student employment and research, teaching and research appointments, and workload in these discussions. Greene offered to come to departmental faculty meetings to discuss this going forward. Discussion of dissemination of the information ensued.

Bertman asked Greene about additional funding for RPC initiatives. Discussion of the history of funding and alternatives for faculty research funding followed. Concern about whether RPC was fully informed on the work of other Faculty Senate councils which touched upon research was raised. Greene distinguished

between one-time money and ongoing funding requests. Greene also noted that a request for increased ongoing allocations should go through Dan Litynski's Office of the Vice President for Research by July 1. Because RPC overspent last year, there is less money to distribute in 2016-17. The increased allocation amount means fewer individuals will be able to get travel or Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works support. Greene and Bertman agreed that the funding from outside is becoming more competitive as well.

*RPC Charges for 2016-17 – Suzan Ayers*

RPC charges have been reviewed by the Faculty Senate Executive Board, but the review is not complete. Wording changes are the only changes anticipated. The charges were distributed to RPC yesterday.

Ciccantell asked about the word “promotion” in terms of the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award, and Support for Faculty Scholars Award. RPC normally evaluates and sets policy about these grants. Promotion has been the job of OVPR. Bertman noted that we have provided proposal writing support for FRACAA and SFSA on an individual level. Litynski noted that the Discovery Seminars try to do this, but getting the word out and getting people to come is a challenge. Ayers said that Executive Board discussion included some conversation about developing opportunities for individuals who experience obstacles in cooperation with diversity initiatives. Ciccantell noted that improving research efforts across campus and encouraging all faculty to conduct research is a goal of the RPC. Additional ways to promote research should be investigated, perhaps in collaboration with the International Education Council. Byrd-Jacobs asked how the line was determined between research concerns and graduate education concerns. Sue Stapleton will be involved in determining this. This problem may also occur with other councils whose work touches upon issues of research.

*Funding Allocations – Bertman and Litynski*

John Risley is serving as Interim Associate Vice President for Research.

Litynski distributed three reports on the fund distributions over the last few years. These documents provide a snapshot of historic distribution and actual expenditure for the Faculty Research Travel Fund, PPP&E, SFSA and FRACAA. Last year these programs overspent by \$30,125. Currently there is \$445,000 for FY2016-17. Litynski proposed a revised distribution. Last year, level of funding was increased for PPP&E and FRTF because individual award amounts were insufficient. Litynski noted that carry-over from FY 2014-15 increased the amount of money available for last year. Ciccantell noted that the broader definition of seeking funding from outside sources in the FRACAA guidelines should result in more and better applications. Work was done by Chris Coryn over the summer to look at the impact of the funds in terms of external funding. A subcommittee of Coryn, Bertman, Spybrook and Criter was formed to work on this further. Discussion followed about one-time money to supplement the allocated funds.

Litynski moved that the allocation of \$445,000 be distributed as \$180,000 for FRACAA, \$45,000 for SFSA, \$20,000 for PPP&E and \$200,000 for FRTF. The motion was seconded by Abudayyeh.

Councell-Vargas recommended that we consider decreasing the average amount of awards for PPP&E from \$900 each to \$750 each, as the average request was under \$800. The decision was made to plan on fewer awards, but a mid-year report was requested to reevaluate in December or January.

Councell-Vargas made a friendly amendment to change the PPP&E per individual limit to \$750. The amendment passed unanimously.

Venter argued that we should increase FRTF per individual, not reduce it. Litynski noted that this could be a priority for one-time funds, but the budget must be balanced. Brown mentioned other travel grants available. OVRP may provide links to all the travel funding sources on campus.

The motion was called with the friendly amendment. With one abstention, the motion passed.

## **Reports**

*Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell*

The survey policy committee's work has been stalled and the arbitrary decisions about who can conduct surveys on campus continue. Coryn noted that two meetings of the committee on survey policy were held and then no more were called. Ciccantell will follow up because this has an impact upon faculty and graduate research.

*Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski*

Litynski distributed postcards for upcoming events including workshops and internal funding opportunities, new faculty orientation and ongoing efforts with new faculty to help them become effective researchers. Finally, he distributed data on external award submissions and awards over the last five years.

*Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton*

Byrd-Jacobs noted that the required online responsible conduct of research course is being required for graduate students during their first semester. The number of students who were accepted and are enrolled is 2300. The number of those who have completed the course is 300 and most (94%) are passing within the three tries. Abudayyeh asked about the certificates so that students do not need to retake the course.

## **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Coryn, seconded by Councell-Vargas, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on October 13 in this same location.

Susan Steuer  
Secretary