

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 13 October 2016
Room 204 (MLK), Bernhard Center

Members present: Osama Abudayyeh, Onur Arugaslan, 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, Patti Van Walbeck, Andre Venter

Also present: Dan Litynski and John Risley, Office of the Vice President for Research

Council Chair Paul Ciccantell called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

Procedural Items

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Arugaslan, seconded by Carlson, to accept the agenda as amended to include two action items, funding distribution for Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund and procedural changes for Support for Faculty Scholar Award. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of 8 September 2016

Coryn moved, supported by Spybrook, to approve the minutes of the 8 September meeting. Motion carried.

Discussion/Information Items

*Discussion of the Office of the Vice President for Research Data
on External Funding*

Tabled for next meeting, in order to address action items in the shortened meeting.

Action Items

Updating Funding Distribution for FRACASF Funds

Dean Litynski distributed material about various aspects on the number of submissions for FRACASF funding in the last several years. He explained that during FY 2013-14 and FY 2014-15 funding for FRACASF was underspent, which gave additional funds for FY 2015-16. Essentially, expenditures stayed within budget. Additional material indicates that Faculty Research Travel Fund and Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works normally exceeded allocations, and thus the distribution between the categories has been adjusted to

better meet actual costs. The amount per award has also changed in several categories. Spending for the first quarter (though incomplete) was distributed, which seems to indicate that FRTF is on its way to overrunning the distribution approved at the previous meeting. OVPR has allocated an additional \$28,380 and one SFSA award was not used (\$1620) to bring the total amount to allocate this year from \$445,000 to \$475,000. Dean Litynski has suggested we increase the FRFT by \$14,331 and PPP&E by \$5000. Further adjustments can be made later.

FRACASF	New Budget	New Award Amount
FRACAA	\$180,000	\$10,000
SFSA	\$45,000	\$2000
FRTF	\$20,000	\$800
PPP&E	\$25,000	\$750
Total	\$475,000	

A motion was proposed by Bertman that this funding proposal be accepted; seconded by Carlson. Motion carried.

Procedural Discussion on SFSA

A motion was made by Bertman, seconded by Coryn, that starting with this round in fall 2016 all SFSA applicants will get feedback on their proposals. The declined proposals will get paraphrased letters from someone on the committee. The awarded proposals will get an addendum comprised of the reviewer's comments. Motion carried.

Discussion ensued regarding the nature of the comments to be provided and who should provide them. Concern about comments which might discourage applications was voiced. Councell-Vargas recommended that reviewers be reminded prior to review at each competition that their comments will be passed on to the applicants. Comments would be provided directly from what the reviewers stated, in an effort to help applicants develop better proposals in the future. General discussion of the purpose of the comments for the application was discussed and a procedure for ensuring that appropriate information with an appropriate tone be sent to the applicant. Litynski noted that the comments should come from faculty reviewers, not OVPR staff. Ciccantell noted that there is a history of committee members not preparing the letters they were assigned, which has been a reason for not sending commentary to successful applicants which might improve their proposals to internal and external funding.

A friendly amendment was proposed to begin this next spring, with the exception of one proposal which was funded with the condition of a letter of comment.

A subcommittee comprised of Ciccantell, Councell-Vargas, Venter, Steuer and Ghantasala will discuss procedural changes which would make SFSA review and feedback more useful.

Reports

Council Chair – Paul Ciccantell

No further report

Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski

No further report

Dean of the Graduate College – Susan Stapleton

Christine Byrd-Jacobs provided a report on the research and travel grants for graduate students. The number awarded was 87 of 113 (64.6% success). They have been encouraging students to apply for external awards as well. Some have won external awards, particularly in engineering.

She updated the Responsible Conduct of Research Course. Most are passing and fewer than 20 individuals had to take the exam again. Some re-took the exam to get a grade of 80% to get a certificate. Any students who have not completed this requirement by Dec. 16 will have a hold placed on their records.

Questions about funding levels for graduate student awards and funding were posed. No change is foreseen. These discussions are being pursued in the Faculty Senate and in other areas of the University.

Byrd-Jacobs also distributed information about WMU's Carnegie peer institutions and noted that WMU is well below peers in science and engineering expenditures and doctoral degrees awarded, but above peers in non-science and engineering fields. WMU also awards more masters' degrees than peers, but rank well below peers in research staff.

Discussions about improving these numbers and other data for external funding was tabled until the next meeting.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on November 10 in the same location.

Susan Steuer
Secretary