

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of May 18, 2017

Members Present: Osama Abudayyeh, Onur Aruguslan, Lori Brown, Christine Byrd-Jacobs (for Susan Stapleton), Paul Ciccantell, Martha Councell-Vargas, Robin Criter, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Dan Litynski, Betty McKain (for Patti Van Walbeck), Jill Rowe, Paul Solomon, Jessaca Spybrook, Susan Steuer
Members Absent: Steve Bertman, Chris Coryn, Katherine Joslin, Andre Venter
Guest: Sherine Obare, Associate Vice President for Research

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m. by Council Chair Paul Ciccantell.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

Ghantasala moved amendments to the agenda. Ghantasala moved to accept the agenda as amended and Spybrook seconded the motion. The agenda was accepted as amended.

Approval of the Minutes

Spybrook moved amendments to the minutes and made a motion to approve the amended minutes of April 13, 2017. Solomon seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The chair welcomed new members Jill Rowe, Interdisciplinary Health Programs, and Anthony DeFulio, Psychology, to the council for 2017-18.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion of Vice President for Research Search Process

Spybrook is a member of the committee and needs talking points about the purpose of the Research Policies Council for the search committee. Abudayyeh mentioned that the RPC reviews policies related to research and works on internal grant allocation. Litynski noted that many memoranda of action for Faculty Senate go through this council for review when they pertain to research. This activity has been less heavy in recent years. The charges come from the Faculty Senate Executive Board or the wider faculty to address concerns related to research. The council is an advisory body for the Faculty Senate and much of the work is procedural. Topics discussed include ethics, data management and stimulation of a research-active environment. Spybrook also asked for any feedback from the council about desired qualities for this role. Suggestions included someone who would bring some advocacy for creative activities.

ACTION ITEMS

Support for Faculty Scholar Award Procedures Revisions – SFSA Subcommittee

Arugaslan moved approval of the revised form and Solomon seconded. Councell-Vargas proposed a friendly amendment to weight the description at 7 points and the budget at 3 points, and Spybrook seconded.

The goal of this project was to clarify and simplify the application and evaluation process and make sure that the questions for applicants line up clearly with the evaluation criteria. Rowe asked about approval by the chair and dean within the application deadlines. The electronic form will be sent to the appropriate individuals for approval post-deadline, relieving this concern from applicants. Solomon called the question. The friendly amendment was defeated. Solomon called the question. The motion to approve the revised form passed unanimously. Steuer noted that feedback from applicants requested that the examples of successful applications on the website be updated to reflect something closer to the current format.

Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award Utilization Analysis – FRACAA Subcommittee

Spybrook noted that this is still at discussion stage and this is a preliminary report on findings. The committee has analyzed data about successful and unsuccessful FRACAA proposals and is correlating this with seeking and securing external funding. Not everyone who gets a FRACAA submits an external grant and many who do not get FRACAA do submit. Ciccantell notes that NEH and Fulbright grants often do not appear in these numbers because they often do not go through the Office of the Vice President for Research and so applicants would need to inform OVPR about their applications. Ciccantell noted that the numbers are small, so the evaluation committee could contact individuals to clarify the data. Steuer asked if the new PAR system could provide data to OVPR. Discussion of the 360 system, PURE and Scholarworks data sharing ensued. Abudayyeh asked if this data could be analyzed by college. Attrition issues may skew the data as well. Spybrook noted that the analysis is still incomplete.

The subcommittee then examined whether FRACAA winners had successful external applications, and found that there was not a great difference in success rate between those who were awarded the grant and those who were not awarded the grant. Spybrook posited that it was possible that the experience of going through the FRACAA process was helpful preparation for writing and submitting grants. Abudayyeh wondered about external submissions before FRACAA awards. Rowe noted that this might also be correlated with workshop attendance; Spybrook replied that this is not available data for the committee. Criter noted that the qualitative vs. quantitative evaluation pools are not particularly helpful or useful and so information on college, and also publication records post-FRACAA could be illuminating. Solomon suggested OVPR be more

proactive about enforcing the submission requirement, at least sending a reminder letter. McKain recommended adding a field to the PAR which would request information on internal funding awards.

Obare asked some further questions regarding the FRACAA data. She wondered if unsuccessful applicants may be very strong at writing disciplinary grants but perhaps not to the audience for FRACAA and that the inverse may be true.

Review of RPC Charges for 2016-17 and Proposed Charges for 2017-18

Ciccantell distributed the charges for this year and described progress on the charges during the past academic year. Many will carry over to the coming year. In particular, an active agenda of policy review is anticipated. Criter noted that she feels that charge 5 (investigation of obstacles to research) is of particular importance.

Election of Officers for 2017-18

Council-Vargas nominated Sue Steuer as chair, seconded by Brown. Steuer accepted the nomination, which was affirmed by acclamation. Abudayyeh nominated Ghantasala for vice chair, seconded by Spybrook. This was affirmed by acclamation, pending his acceptance of the position. Should he decline, the process will continue via email. Council-Vargas nominated Coryn for secretary, seconded by Abudayyeh. This was affirmed by acclamation, pending his acceptance of the position. Should he decline, the process will continue via email.

Reports

Chair's Report – Paul Ciccantell

Ciccantell noted that he will be on sabbatical next year and will not serve on the council. He noted that the charges constituted most of his report, which was covered earlier. He thanked the council members for their work this year.

Vice President for Research – Daniel Litynski

Litynski presented Pure Discovery experts tool, which was designed to help commercial entities find experts at research partners for their projects. He discussed all the types of data that can be added to the material harvested by the system. He also presented financial information on FRACAA, SFSA, Faculty Research Travel Fund, and Publication of Papers and Exhibitions of Creative Works expenditures. Litynski believes the data is cautiously positive. He also described scholarly output.

Dean of the Graduate College – Christine Byrd-Jacobs for Susan Stapleton

The April round for research and travel funds has been completed and research awards were also completed. Ciccantell spoke glowingly on behalf of these awards and encouraged the council to promote the opportunities to students and colleagues.

OTHER

Brown noted that she has been transferred to the Florida campus and will no longer serve on the council.

The council cancelled the June meeting, due to lack of business, by acclamation.

ADJOURNMENT

Ciccantell moved adjournment, which was approved by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Susan Steuer, Secretary