

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE  
Research Policies Council  
Minutes of 8 October 2020**

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Research Council was called to order at 2:32 p.m. on 8 October 2020, via Webex video conferencing by Chair Onur Arugaslan.

**Roll Call**

**Members in Attendance:** Onur Arugaslan, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Steven Carr, Robert Wall Emerson, Wanda Hadley, David Huffman, Terri Kinzy, Heather Petcovic, Melissa Rajter (GSA representative), Jessica Rocheleau (GSA representative), Paul Solomon, Andre Venter

**Members Absent:** Chris Coryn

**Ex Officio Members in Attendance:** Manuel Bautista, Anthony DeFulio

**Guest(s):** Kay Mortellaro, Research Development Admin, Office of Research and Innovation; Susan Steuer, Professor, University Libraries

**Quorum**

A quorum was present.

**Acceptance of the Agenda**

The agenda was modified such that the discussion of the 2020-21 RPC charges occurred earlier in the meeting. It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Carr, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**Election of Council Officer**

Robert Wall Emerson agreed to serve as secretary. It was moved and seconded to elect Wall Emerson as secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the Minutes**

It was moved by Venter, seconded by Carr, to approve the minutes of 10 September 2020 as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

**New Business**

Discussion was held regarding charge #3 *Continue the review and promotion of the Faculty Research and Creative activities Award (FRACAA) program with the goal of increasing its utilization by faculty, including investing strategies to increase the number of quality proposal submitted across all disciplines.* It was noted that there is a need to maintain a high number of FRACAA submissions and to ensure that submissions they are high quality, with projects that operate as the program intends. Poster presentations offer an opportunity for networking that might not otherwise happen. There remains a need for faculty to volunteer as FRACAA reviewers. Venter suggested that a condition of obtaining a FRACAA might be that the recipient must review future submissions. Bautista noted that some faculty feel the amount of money is not worth the effort and the posters are an unpleasant part of participation. Petcovic suggested that a 10-minute presentation might be more palatable to some faculty. Bautista noted that e-posters might also allow more flexibility for faculty presenting. Some faculty view the FRACAA funds as not being flexible. Kinzy noted that the money can be used for many research related costs and Venter noted that FRACAA funds are only supposed to be a gateway to a larger submission. Kinzy suggested looking at how often a FRACCA recipient obtained later funding, and perhaps using these success stories to encourage more applications. DeFulio and Bautista will compile a report on FRACAA recipients and how the program is advertised that can be used to guide future actions on encouraging FRACAA applications.

Discussion was held regarding charge #4 *Review the Support for Faculty Scholar Awards (SFSA) proposals and promote the program to encourage faculty from all disciplines to submit quality proposals.* Mortellaro noted that she is new to SFSA but at first glance, saw many familiar names on the submission list. It was suggested that ways to get a more varied set of applicants should be explored. Typically, there

is a high success rate so it would benefit from more advertising. DeFulio suggested adding a weighting component to submission scores like bonus points for new applicants, newer faculty, previous applicants who were unsuccessful, etc. DeFulio and Arugaslan will look at the existing MOA to see how it might be modified/improved. Kinzy noted that the original MOA is from 2007-08 and was updated twice in 2015-16 with minor clarifications. Kinzy advocated that a new MOA that merges and simplifies all the prior MOAs, such that it allows the procedures and amounts to be set by RPC annually without requiring additional MOA changes. It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Hadley, to add 0.25 scoring bonus to the final score based on never having applied, never having been successful, or the applicant being an assistant professor or faculty specialist I. The motion carried unanimously. Bautista will add these changes to his report on FRACAA.

### **Reports of University Administrators**

Vice President for Research and Innovation Terri Kinzy noted a dip in expenditures for sponsored programs last year. Awards are down but have had a good last couple of weeks. Attendance is good at the virtual research development seminars. It was suggested that re-applicants for FRACAA and SFSA would benefit from the seminars. Research will continue for those projects with an approved plan.

Graduate College Dean Christine Byrd-Jacobs reported that the 3-minute thesis winner was one of six finalist in the regional competition. WMU had 119 doctoral graduates this past year. The Graduate Studies Council endorsed temporarily waiving the University GRE requirement for doctoral programs, however, four programs have elected to keep the requirement. Graduate enrollment is down 11%, the continuation of a 10-year trend. The recent move of many classes to distance learning might remain after the pandemic as graduate programs remain or move more online.

### **Report of Subcommittee**

The Research Screening Subcommittee topic was postponed to the next meeting.

### **Unfinished Business**

Arugaslan noted MOA-19/09: Revision of the Research Misconduct Policy been before RPC for a long time, awaiting AAUP feedback. It was a concern that some of the language might impinge on the AAUP. However, Deputy General Counsel Jessica Swartz proposed language that should be acceptable to AAUP. The MOA will be amended with this new language and be placed on the next meeting agenda.

### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

Vice president Terri Kinzy was not able to get clarification on what the issues were with the Conflict of Interest Policy. DeFulio wondered whether an MOA on this policy is needed. Arugaslan noted that this issue arises from the RPC charge #6 *Monitor the viability of the solution to issues related of the Conflict of Interest Policy and construct a formal written memo regarding a solution based on real case data.* The changes that have been made to the conflict of interest policy (some formatting changes, some language about federal reporting requirements) might need a new MOA be created. Kinzy indicated there is no past MOA for this policy, and that it is research conflict of interest only. DeFulio will investigate what action is needed.

### **New Business, Cont.**

Faculty Senate President Marilyn Kritzman has requested that all councils establish an agenda setting subcommittee, which includes at least the council chair (Arugaslan), vice chair (Carr), Faculty Senate Executive Board liaison (DeFulio), and Vice President Kinzy. Future agendas will be coming from this committee to the Faculty Senate Office for review and distribution.

### **Announcements**

New Graduate Student Association representatives Melissa Rajter and Jessica Rocheleau introduced themselves.

Steuer informed the council about the Library Skills Week coming up in two weeks.

**Adjournment**

It was moved by Steuer, seconded by Kinzy, to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval**

Submitted by Robert Wall Emerson, Secretary.

Minutes approved this twelfth day of November 2020.