

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
Research Policies Council
Minutes of 10 December 2020**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Research Council was called to order at 2:31 p.m. on 10 December 2020, via Webex video conferencing by chair Onur Arugaslan.

Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Todd Barkman (substituting for David Huffman), Lori Brown, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Steven Carr, Chris Coryn, Wanda Hadley, Terri Kinzy, Heather Petcovic, Melissa Rajter, Jessica Rocheleau, Paul Solomon, Susan Steuer, Andre Venter, Robert Wall Emerson

Ex Officio Members in Attendance: Manuel Bautista, Anthony DeFulio

Guest(s): Steve Weber, Research Contract Administrator, Office of Research and Innovation

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Acceptance of the Agenda

The Dean of the Graduate College Report agenda item was moved to the beginning of the agenda to accommodate the dean's schedule. It was moved by Hadley, seconded by DeFulio, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Venter, to approve the minutes of 12 November 2020 as provided. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of University Representative(s)

Graduate College Dean Christine Byrd-Jacobs reported that the graduate research and travel grants had been awarded. Ten travel grants and 19 research grants were awarded for a total of \$20,000. Everyone who applied was awarded. The next round of awards will be distributed spring 2021. Kinzy noted that WMU is receiving minimal applications for faculty travel grants, just like the graduate student applications. Dean Byrd-Jacobs indicated that the Graduate Studies Council discussed the poster and research day and decided it will be housed in the Graduate College hence forth. Graduate student mental health and well-being has been a topic of discussion at the recent meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools. Barkman asked about graduate assistantships (GA), to which Byrd-Jacobs response indicated that it is unclear will happen next year. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Jennifer Bott has expressed understanding for the need for GA being funding, but it is uncertain right now. In the new budget model, the GA allocation will be distributed to the college deans who will be responsible for distributing the funds to each department. Rajter reported that students have expressed concerned about GA funding in the coming semesters. Rocheleau agreed and noted that students are anxious which is impacting productivity and engagement. Bautista noted that delay of research also delays graduation of graduate students, therefore, allowances may be needed to allow students to remain enrolled. Byrd-Jacobs noted that the existing program extension form can be used, and it would likely not be refused, however, program extension does not equate to additional funding.

Reports of Officers

Chair Arugaslan welcomed guest Steve Weber who will report about MOA-19/09: Revision of the Research Misconduct Policy.

DeFulio reported that the action taken at the last meeting regarding MOA-19/09 will need to be reconsidered because it was found that text had been altered. Once approved by the RPC the MOA then goes before the Executive Board, and then to the floor of the Senate, after which it will be reviewed by the University Policy Committee.

Reports of University Representative(s), Cont.

Vice President for Research and Innovation Terri Kinzy reported that expenditures for FRACASF are very low. The new program in ORI to repair and replace equipment has had just a few applications. The Named Professorship has been changed to the Presidential Innovation Professorship (PIP). The next deadline for applications/nominations is 26 January 2021 at 5 p.m. A new hire PIP is still available. The PIP is \$15,000 a year for three years. Kinzy was asked about the future of the University and research, to which she responded with ways that research endeavors and interdisciplinarity are being supported and moved forward at the University. Arugaslan asked what will be done with the FRACASF balance. Kinzy indicated that it will carry over and will not impact future allocations.

Reports of Standing Committee

Bautista provided the report of the Research Screening Committee. Topics included:

1. Guidelines need to be updated. The membership needs to be changed such that what has been defined as “13 to 20” is left open for the chair to determine how many members are needed each year. Bautista proposed that enough members are recruited so that there are at least three reviewers are available per proposal.
 - a. remove the requirement that the committee is appointed “at the beginning of the academic year” since it is generally done just before work begins
 - b. the process for nominations for members needs to be changed so that solicitations for nominations from RPC and associate deans is deleted
 - c. currently, members of the committee are those that have gotten external awards, but it is being proposed that it also include faculty who have previously received FRACAA funding, but not necessarily external funding
 - d. change the appointment term from three-years to an annual basis, and add a requirement to that members may not serve for more than three consecutive years
 - e. language currently indicates that members will vary by college, discipline, gender, ethnicity, but it should state that members will vary by college and discipline while efforts will be made to vary membership on other variables, adding language that the FRSC will follow University policies and recommendations on diversity and inclusion

Discussion was held regarding the proposed language modifications. Venter asked why it cannot be required to have recipients serve on future FRACAA review committees. Kinzy suggested that the number of recipients be tracked in order to determine if they need to be required to serve. Brown noted that a survey had been conducted previously which indicated that such a requirement was seen as a bit of an impediment. Brown noted that someone who has received FRACAA funding does not equate to an efficient reviewer. Discussion was held. DeFulio suggested introducing a mentored reviewing involvement for potential reviewers. It was moved by Bautista, seconded by Barkman, to approve the proposed language modifications. The motion carried unanimously.

2. It was suggested that email be used to recruit additional volunteer reviewers. A sample email was distributed. Faculty responding to the email invitation would go to a FRACAA web page to enter their information so that a pool of candidates for the screening committee could be created. Bautista requests approval of this process, and adding a request for demographic info (gender, ethnicity) from volunteers. Petcovic suggested adding a statement about the benefits of being a volunteer (e.g., getting better at writing proposals by reviewing proposals). Brown noted that travel grants might be allowed to be compiled or used for other types of travel related items. Kinzy noted that such a suggestion should be determined by RPC rather than leaving the decision to the Office for Research and Innovation. Travel awards for reviewers is not listed anywhere in the documentation. Kinzy suggested that all recipients who were awarded travel for reviewing this year should be sent an email stating that it can be applied for another year and that reviewers from next year will be allowed two years to use the travel award.

It was moved by Bautista, seconded by DeFulio, to accept the proposed changes. The motion carried unanimously. It was moved by Bautista, seconded by Venter, to accept the extension of travel awards. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Bautista reported on the poster day and previous e-posters. Bautista conferred with an external vendor for e-posters. Kinzy is researching the costs, organization, and approach to using e-posters across

groups at the University. Bautista shared an example of an e-poster. Bautista suggested encouraging applicants and diversity. It was noted that it would be good to have quotas for diversity or young faculty awardees. Bautista would like to introduce a mentoring program, especially for new submissions and is requesting volunteers to assist as mentors for this year. Mentors would be assigned to the three areas and one mentee, once mentees requests assistance. The level and amount of mentoring activity would be up to the mentor/mentee pair. Mentors should be experienced in reviewing and/or writing FRACAA submissions. DeFulio asked whether a person who has gotten external funding but has not been involved in FRACAA could be a mentor. Bautista suggested that such a person could. Brown, DeFulio, Petcovic, and Venter volunteered. Venter suggested that the invitation be expanded to experienced FRACAA reviewers who are not currently reviewing. Bautista would like to collect demographic data from FRACAA awardees on a voluntary basis with data to be collected and kept by ORI and separated from the application and review process. This information would be used to encourage submissions from groups not being represented in awards. It was moved by Bautista, second by Barkman, to collect the demographic data. The motion carried unanimously.

Kinzy reported on the Conflict of Interest Policy that Steve Weber and Amy Naugle are updating the policy and processes due to several variables, including increased scrutiny from federal agencies. Changes will not be substantial but will be federally required. It will be presented to RPC at its January RPC.

Agenda item regarding the changing the councils name was postponed.

Weber noted that MOA-19/09: Revision of the Research Misconduct Policy began review in 2019. The last iteration was reviewed by the Professional Concerns Committee which submitted substantial recommended changes. Student Conduct handbook language was suggested rather than the federally mandated language. Kinzy and Weber suggested that RPC revert the language to the original definitions and remove suggested changes made by PCC on the definitions page. Venter suggested that a revised clean copy be provided for review at the January meeting. Kinzy and Weber will provide the requested clean copy prior to the next meeting.

New Business

Discussion of Charge #8: *Identify approaches and methods used to increase civility and respect in order to create a safe environment both within the Faculty Senate and the University* was postponed.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

It was moved by Carr, seconded by Venter, to adjourn the meeting at 4:29 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

The Research Policies Council will meet next on 14 January 2021 via Webex at 2:30 p.m.

Approval

Submitted by Robert Wall Emerson, Secretary

Minutes approved this fourteenth day of January 2021.