

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 16 May 2013

Members present: Brooks Applegate, Steve Bertman, Martha Councell-Vargas, Muralidhar Ghantasala, James Kiddle, Michael Kiella, Daniel Litynski, Muhammad Razi, Vladimir Risukhin, Sue Stapleton, Alan Wuosmaa

Council Chair Brooks Applegate called the meeting to order at 2:51 p.m.

Applegate welcomed David Rudge from the University Center for the Humanities (from biology/Mallison Institute for Science Education).

DISCUSSION ITEM

A discussion ensued regarding the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award requirement to apply for external funding, and it was argued the Arts and Humanities funding is difficult if not impossible to acquire. The FRACAA in essence excludes Arts and Humanities by stipulating that the PI apply for external funding in the amount at least equal to the FRACAA award. The Support for Faculty Scholar Award has been designed to meet some of the needs. Two issues were raised: 1) The external funding stipulation of the FRACAA is prohibitive to arts and humanities faculty. 2) The "equal-to or greater than" clause is also restrictive.

- 1) SFSA is not enough for arts/humanities. We may want to shift funds between SFSA and FRACAA to address this problem.
- 2) Arts and Humanities faculty acquire external funding often, from private foundations like Fulbright, and other grants. Because those funds go directly to the individual, they do not use the Proposal Approval Form (PAF) and therefore do not "count" in the eyes of the Office of the Vice President for Research.

The council concluded that it would like to request Faculty Senate to charge RPC to study the external submission language.

Perhaps a separate system should exist to keep track of "other" external funding, similar to the PAF.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Approval of Agenda for 16 May 2013

A motion was made by Kiella and seconded by Stapleton to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes of 11 April 2013

A motion was made by Bertman and seconded by Councell-Vargas to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

REPORTS

Council Chair – Brooks Applegate

Applegate will be contacting members regarding the June 30th deadline for the RPC annual report related to charges. He also thanked the council for the work done this year.

Vice President for Research – Dan Litynski

- He has received many discovery plans from each department of the university. These plans asked for self-assessments for competitiveness, and 200 research programs were identified. Thirty-five of these self assessed that they are collaborative and competitive at the global or national level.
- Discovery focus areas will be reviewed throughout the next month. Discovery plans have already been used in various ways.
- Bertman wondered if this was a result of the planning process. It would be helpful to show that this is part of the ongoing coordinated strategic effort.

Dean of the Graduate College – Sue Stapleton

- We are a part of the Alliance for Graduate Education to Professoriate in response to a 15-page proposal. Each institution was presented with this list of questions. Stapleton expressed concern about this. Dissertation writing retreat was one result of the AGEF – under-represented students were provided with a writing coach to help fund a retreat to help finish their dissertations. The writing coach has a national reputation (University of Maryland).
- WMU has submitted a BUILD proposal, which is somewhat like an AGEF. It stimulates diversity in graduate programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.
- Stapleton is also working toward helping students with financial literacy tools for graduate students. This is already in place for incoming undergraduates but does not include the transfer students; it was focused on the transition between high school and college. The tools that will be developed will now target transfer and graduate students.
- Support for graduate student travel/research: \$90,000 has been spent. New graduate student orientation for GA's is August 28th. Julia Mays will hold a session for students on Research Discovery appointments.
- Unified Graduate Admissions: We have a PAT (project action team) under the student success umbrella, which has looked at the currently decentralized process for graduate admissions. There is a University process, and international process, and each unit has its own process. We have looked at our process to see if we can improve communication. Many

of our peers and competitors have grown their own system. There are commercial vendors as well. This would be an entirely online graduate admissions process. Stapleton will be proposing a particular vendor, the cost for which could be covered if we increase the application fee by \$10. Within the week we will have a recommendation to the provost.

REPORTS RELATED TO RPC CHARGES

- Alan Wuosmaa reported on charge #1 regarding the RPC role statement. Proposed rewording of the role statement. A motion was made by Wuosmaa and seconded by Ghantasala to approve the new wording and move it forward to the Faculty Senate. Motion approved.

“Evaluate the processes used to support and enhance creative activities and scholarship.” We have to identify what processes means. It’s not clear because P in RPC is for policies, not processes. Processes in which we are involved: FRACAA, SFSA, and Poster Day.

- Continuing or Outstanding Initiatives (n/a)
- Research Ethics Advisory Team. Ethics Training by graduate students funded by the National Science Foundation. Applegate reported that a group has formed to discuss this coursework and members of this group will be reporting back to the ethics group.
- Conflict of Interest: Implemented last year (per last meeting report by Paula Kohler)
- Establish criteria, standards, benchmarks – Steve Bertman is still investigating whether or not FRACAA is increasing external funding proposals. All FRACAA awards have been announced. Kiella suggested that we review the criteria for the review of FRACAA proposals to include “bonus points” for the involvement of graduate or undergraduate researchers.

Stapleton added that the Graduate College is sponsoring a workshop at the library re: Research and digital resources. Graduate students would like more training with digital humanities projects. Students will be offered opportunities to do mini projects with experts; library has an investment in some of the tools, has interest in facilitating this. It is open to faculty interested.

Discussion of Election of New Officers

Applegate is happy to serve as chair again and Wuosmaa is willing to serve as vice chair. Councill-Vargas is not interested in serving as secretary on the Executive Committee.

A motion for adjournment was approved. The meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Martha Councill-Vargas