

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE**

**RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of October 11, 2018**

Members Present: Osama Abudayyeh, Manuel Bautista, Christine Byrd-Jacobs (for Sue Stapleton), Chris Coryn, Anthony DeFulio, Jonathan Eiseman, Muralidhar Ghantasala, William Homan, Katherine Joslin, Aneudy Mota, Sherine Obare (for Terri Kinzy), Jill Rowe, Paul Solomon, Susan Steuer, Andre Venter
Members Absent: Onur Arugaslan, Jennifer Bott, Patti Van Walbeck

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. by Chair Susan Steuer, after completion of the Support for Faculty Scholar Award evaluations. A quorum was present.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

Obare requested an amendment to the agenda to revisit the discussion on Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund funding. This was added as Action Item B3, and B4 is now "Updates and concerns from the floor".

The amended agenda was approved by acclamation.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of September 13 were approved by acclamation.

ACTION ITEMS

Finalize the Membership for the Subcommittee on Interdisciplinary Research Collaborations

A discussion ensued as a follow-up to the September RPC meeting regarding establishing a sub-committee on Interdisciplinary Research Collaborations (with respect to Charge #4). Obare shared an example on how the College of Arts and Sciences has taken an approach to address this matter. Currently, there is a goal to have cluster hires with the area being Public Health, and there would be lots of opportunity for faculty in CAS to collaborate with faculty in the College of Health and Human Services. There was some discussion of how to ensure success for new hires. It was questioned how RPC provides guidance to chairs and leadership. Joslin asked how the council determines best practices. Further discussion focused on using the RPC subcommittee to work on developing best practices for success using examples from the literature and other institutions to build and strengthen interdisciplinary research and teaching at WMU.

As another example, Obare noted that the Office of the Vice President for Research has established Innovation Networking Sessions. The first was held in August 2018 and it focused on Opioids. The topic was broad and attracted scholars from all disciplines. The Innovation Networking Sessions are driven by specific topics that are emerging areas for funding, and they bring people together

to think of new ways to do research utilizing various skills, and also building capacity to apply for funding. Joslin said that sometimes it bubbles up from the interest of the group. Obare noted that based on several studies, in order for new initiatives to be successful they need to be valued by departments and colleges especially when it comes to promotion and tenure. Steuer noted that sometimes individuals might not be aware of others who would work together well. Rowe asked if this was focused on new hires, or existing faculty. Obare noted both. Rowe noted that collaboration initiatives have not always contacted all of the individuals who have an interest in the topic; poor communication is also a problem. Ghantasala noted that deans and leaders have to agree on guidelines so this committee should focus on how to help them communicate and make decisions.

Suggested Members to be contacted to serve on the Interdisciplinary Research Collaborations Subcommittee are: Irma Lopez, Paul Gallagher, Shiva Bade Shrestha, Sue Stapleton, Jonathan Eisemann, Aneude Mota, Sherine Obare, Katherine Joslin, and Bob Bensley.

Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award Workshop Content – Sherine Obare

OVPR plans to hold a workshop for FRACAA. RPC members are asked to suggest strategies to strengthen the quality of the proposals and for tips that would be helpful for workshops. Ghantasala recommended someone with quantitative expertise to help review. DeFulio said that a focus on feasibility is important. Joslin voiced concern about what kinds of grants are acceptable for FRACAA for humanities and fine arts. Obare explained that in many cases, OVPR sees faculty from the arts and the humanities applying for grants from foundations, and OVPR works closely with the WMU Foundation to apply these grants according to the sponsor regulations. Often these sponsors limit the facilities and administrative costs, but we are obligated to meet the sponsor's requirements; therefore, if a sponsor limits F&A costs, it does not mean that those awards are not eligible for meeting the FRACAA criteria. Applicants should contact OVPR to get assistance on how to process the applications. Bautista noted that often people leave out part of the required information on the FRACAA applications, making their awards less competitive. He requested that the workshop cover important areas and that RPC consider having a video and a PowerPoint for those who cannot attend.

Funding for FRACASF

Over the last three years FRACASF has gone over budget, and the new leadership in OVPR requires that all budgets are balanced. The Faculty Research Travel Fund is usually what goes over, because it is an unknown. Obare shared data for how funds have been spent in the past few years and based on this data, recommended capping SFSA at \$34K and FRACAA at \$172K for 2018-19. There is some incentive for an in-house review of Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works or a reduction in each award. Abudayyeh noted that SFSA and FRACAA should be flexible so RPC can consider the quality of awards. The goal is to be balanced this year.

DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS

Highlights of WMU Research this Month – Sherine Obare

OVPR will host an Innovation Networking Session on Thursday, November 15, at the Fetzer Center, titled PFAS and other Emerging Contaminants. The session will focus on various environmental issues in Michigan and beyond, funding opportunities, and faculty presenters.

Research Policies and Procedures Update – Sherine Obare

Several of the reviewed policies have been sent to the University Policy Committee for review.

OTHER

Council Chair – Susan Steuer

There was no report.

Associate Vice President for Research – Sherine Obare

Obare shared a handout about an initiative spearheaded by Vice President Terri Kinzy, called the Bronco Big Idea competition, which is part of the NSF 2026 Big Idea Machine. WMU is looking for ideas from the community, students, faculty, and staff. Visit the NSF and the WMU Research websites to learn more about this initiative and share it with colleagues and students; applicants need to be 14 years and older.

Associate Dean of the Graduate College – Christine Byrd-Jacobs

- 1) Research and travel grants (students) application deadline is October 26; InfoReady
- 2) 3-minute thesis competition, noon on November 14, Bernhard Center rooms 208-209; a great opportunity to see what kind of research is being done.
- 3) ISD Doctorate; thriving; beyond expectations

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Steuer, seconded by Ghantasala, to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted by Paul Solomon,
Secretary