

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE  
RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of 10 October 2019**

**Members Present:** Osama Abudayyeh, Onur Arugaslan, Manuel Bautista, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Zari Carpenter (Graduate Student Association), Chris Coryn, Martha Councell-Vargas, Anthony DeFulio, David Szabla (for Wanda Hadley), David Huffman, Steve Weber (for Terri Kinzy), Paul Solomon, Daria Orłowska (for Sue Steuer), Patti Van Walbeck, Andre Venter  
**Guest:** Tony Proudfoot, Vice President for Marketing and Strategic Communication

**PROCEDURAL ITEMS**

*Acceptance of the Agenda*

Coryn moved to accept the agenda; Van Walbeck seconded. Motion carried.

*Approval of the Minutes*

Solomon moved to approve the minutes of 12 September; Coryn seconded. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS**

*Best Practices and Communication of Faculty Achievements – Tony Proudfoot*  
Vice President Proudfoot explained that community members not employed in higher education have limited interest in research, mainly as it impacts their lives such as jobs, health, safety, and security.

Proudfoot has analyzed deficiencies in the basic marketing at WMU prior to his arrival, and discussed ways they are being addressed, such as newsletters, etc. His office will have a marketing/managing editor who will serve the University by collecting and deciding how to distribute stories to outside sources via appropriate channels. New thinking is many sources of input and many channels for output should be tailored to the nature of the information.

Solomon asked how faculty can let people know about their work. The best contacts for faculty are Erin Flynn, News and Communication Specialist, and Paula Davis, Director of Strategic Communications, who vet all stories. Proudfoot believes that contacting chairs/deans first does not add value. He also talked about managing expectations. His office is in the brand building business, not the recognition business. His job is to capture resources via brand building. The office used to, but no longer provides graduate student headshots as an example.

Bautista and Venter raised concerns about Proudfoot's perspective that basic research does not sell and is not worth marketing. Proudfoot described his extensive experience and success in generating increased media hits in his leadership roles at prior institutions.

Proudfoot explained that what moves an audience is frequency of message over a period of time. A story in the New York Times for one day gives value for that day. He says it takes six exposures for a message to be recognized, and another three

to be understood. Proudfoot's office of four is working strategically to generate the level of messaging that will make an impact.

Solomon voiced concerns that RPC members are often focused on access to technical press and Proudfoot on popular/mainstream media. Proudfoot proposed that hiring a science-focused marketing person could assist with this but that the return on investment would be poor and likely even negative.

Proudfoot addressed media attention via expert opinion. Media calls for experts must be returned fairly immediately. Media in bigger markets have other sources and will not call us, only local media. Proudfoot's role does not include media attention for research, because it does not bring resources into the institution and there is inadequate staffing.

Venter reiterated that WMU is not viewed as a research institution and that changing that view has value. DeFulio agreed and asked for clarification about why advancing the research message doesn't translate into dollars.

Proudfoot described the difficulty of making a national impact. Major outlets cover only the most major research findings. Newsrooms have a fifth of the staff, and less content is covered in the major outlets.

Abudayyeh commented on messaging into Chicago because WMU recruits there. He emphasized unique programs etc. Proudfoot explained that the big media there simply will not cover the University. WMU pays for exposure in a variety of Midwest markets, including Chicago.

Proudfoot reiterated his point about managing expectations and understanding that even research that moves the world forward will not necessarily be good as the topic of a media pitch.

Solomon expressed the value in Vice President for Research and Innovation Terri Kinzy having this kind of conversation with Proudfoot.

There are three areas of marketing: Earned media – only cares about what gets eyeballs. Paid media – advertiser can do whatever is wanted because it pays for the space. Owned media – Western Michigan University website and newsletters; the University can talk about things it thinks are important that are of interest to its audience that earned media will not take up.

Proudfoot needs faculty to trust the marketing/communications staff's decisions about whether and how to market a particular story. As WMU becomes more visible, marketing and communications will have more requests for videos and stories. Spending time debating these decisions wastes limited resources.

Abudayyeh suggested a designee from Proudfoot's office to serve on the working group for Charge #5 regarding highlighting faculty research and creative activity accomplishments, which is chaired by Solomon. Proudfoot agreed and encouraged attendance at the town halls about the brand-building strategy.

Szabla asked about the idea of science writers for promoting messaging to technical outlets. Proudfoot replied that the return on investment is not good enough in the current context of the WMU brand, which he says is very challenged.

The University's message is not going to be that WMU is a research university. It's not strategic because of our standing and local competition. Nevertheless, research is part of the messaging and faculty partnership is essential.

*Support for Faculty Scholar Award Applications – Onur Arugaslan*

Arugaslan reminded the council about its SFSA responsibilities and that members are to write reviews that include feedback on how applicants can improve their applications in future submissions rather than simply offering scores.

**ACTION ITEM**

*MOA-19/09 Revision of the Research Misconduct Policy*

Abudayyeh asked about the additional text shown in bold on page 9. Weber noted that this is a holdover issue from the prior meeting of the RPC. Weber was not sure why the text was there. Abudayyeh moved to remove the bolded text and approve the policy so revised; Bautista seconded. Discussion ensued. Byrd-Jacobs wondered about original intent which is still unclear and suggested possibility of postponing it. Weber explained that there is no tracked changes in the draft to tell who added it and that the language seems duplicative.

Venter raised concern that the policy is hard to track because of the bullets as replacing the more trackable "1.a." type of tracking.

Weber raised the concern that the acronym ORI (Office of Research Integrity) is a national organization, but the former OVPR (Office of the Vice President for Research) is now ORI (Office of Research and Innovation), which can cause confusion as to what entity is being referenced. References to the various entities in the Memorandum of Action need to be cleaned up throughout the document. Venter agreed and will send a tracked changes version pointing out difficulties with the document.

Abudayyeh moved to postpone further discussion of this MOA until next month. Byrd-Jacobs seconded and the motion was approved by unanimous agreement.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

The following items were presented via email to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting.

1. Fly America Act Policy
2. Unallowable Costs – Reasonableness Doctrine Policy
3. Subrecipient Monitoring Policy
4. Cost Transfer Policy
5. Excess Compensation in Sponsored Programs Policy
6. Federal Costing Principles Policy
7. FFAT Reporting Policy – Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act
8. Participant Support Costs Policy

9. Prior Approval Request Policy
10. Program Income in Sponsored Projects Policy
11. Project Closeout Policy
12. Summer Salary on Grants and Contracts Policy

Abudayyeh raised concern with #12, summer salary on grants and contracts policy, as it runs aground of the AAUP contract. He advocated strongly that the Office of Research and Innovation consult with AAUP on this policy. The concern relates to grants and contracts that do not fall under the policy because they do not involve federal sources.

**UPDATES AND REPORTS**

*RPC Chair and Vice Chair – Arugaslan and DeFulio.*

No updates to report.

*Office of Research and Innovation – Weber*

The foreign influence website is now available and feedback is solicited from the council. Early career funding discovery workshop is on 15 October. It is not clear if it is open to graduate students. Carpenter asked if she could push this to graduate council. Weber will follow up.

*Dean of the Graduate College – Byrd-Jacobs*

The three-minute thesis competition is upcoming on 13 November from noon to 2 p.m. in Bernhard Center. Faculty can encourage students to compete, attend and encourage attendance, and serve as judges. If interested in judging, contact Byrd-Jacobs via email. The Graduate Student Association is the organizer. The application deadline is around 20 October. It does not have to be their thesis.

The responsible conduct of research course is required of all graduate students, which is gradually moving to full compliance. Analysis of data shows that engineering scored higher, but otherwise things look roughly equal and fair. Research misconduct rates have been decreasing since this training requirement was implemented.

The number of enrolled graduate studies is 4,419 with 905 students on appointment, and of those, 82 are funded on grants.

Arugaslan asked about whether the 50% enrollment rate for accepted graduate students has been stable.

Carpenter asked about financial incentives for graduate students who apply for external funding. Byrd-Jacobs talked about this as a conversation in progress and was open to the idea of an incentive approach.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Solomon and seconded by Coryn. Motion carried.

Submitted by Anthony DeFulio, in substitute for Secretary Susan Steuer