

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL  
Minutes of 8 February 2018

**Members Present:** Osama Abudayyeh, Onur Arugaslan, Steve Bertman, Chris Coryn, Martha Councell-Vargas, Anthony DeFulio, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Katherine Joslin, Sherine Obare, Paul Solomon, Susan Steuer

**Members Absent:** Stevens Bonhomme, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Damon Chambers, Willem Homan, James Kiddle, Jill Rowe, Patti Van Walbeck

**Guest:** Melanie Greer, Office of the Vice President for Research

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. after completion of the Support for Faculty Scholar Award reviews.

### PROCEDURAL ITEMS

#### *Acceptance of the Agenda*

A motion was made by Bertman, seconded by Ghantasala, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

#### *Approval of the Minutes*

A motion was made by Bertman, seconded by Ghantasala, to approve the minutes of 11 January. Motion carried.

#### *Announcements/Chair's Remarks*

Steuer noted that Coryn may step down from the joint Research Policies Council/International Education Council working group due to conflicting demands on his time, and she requested volunteers. No one volunteered.

### DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS

#### *Proposal Submission Timelines*

Obare presented a new policy on proposal submission timelines, requiring grant seekers to provide materials to their research officers at noon, seven business days prior to the deadline for the grant. While Obare recognizes that some will regard these guidelines as a hardship, it is in line with policies at other institutions. The goal is to ensure that grant seekers have the best chance at success. The time is allocated to make sure all applications can be submitted on time and to allow research officers to be of greater assistance in ensuring compliance to grant guidelines and required formatting. On occasion, grants have not been able to be submitted because of formatting and other issues which could have been resolved with a bit more lead time. There will be a learning curve for faculty to comply and the guidelines will be applied more loosely for some period of time to allow individuals to "learn" the new system. A motion was made by Bertman to endorse the policy; seconded by de Fulio. Motion carried. Abudayyeh will take this forward to the Faculty Senate Executive Board to determine next steps.

#### *Sponsored Programs vs. Departmental Services*

Obare presented a document designed to clarify whether services provided to entities outside of the University must go through OVPR or can be handled at the department level. This will be made available for consultation by those who are not sure how their activities are classified and what is the best way to proceed. Obare noted that when intellectual property is involved or legal protections may be needed, going through OVPR is essential. The council agreed that the document is clear.

#### *Developing a Schedule for Policy Review*

Steuer spoke to RPC Charge #4 – *Develop a procedure for the regular review of university policies related to research by the RPC and a schedule for conducting these regular reviews on a five-year rotating basis. Begin policy reviews in 2017-18.* – and requested that Obare provide an overview of the scope of the work needed to get the research policies in order. Obare noted that many policies are dictated by international, federal and state law and those changes are beyond the scope of RPC. She stated that a number of policies are needed to address gaps in current policy. Existing policies fall into two categories, those that are fairly stable and will need less frequent review and those that need more frequent review to address changes in research standards and other mutable issues. It was proposed that a two-tier schedule be developed. Some policies will be reviewed every three years, and others every five years. In some cases, policies which need immediate review will be brought to RPC off schedule. RPC requested that OVPR come up with a list of needed policies, and of which policies need to be on which schedule, with a goal of having needed policies in place and to implement the new schedule by fall 2020. Obare will provide a document for approval at the March meeting.

#### *Promoting Research Strengths of WMU*

Obare presented a document which was developed based upon conversations with associate deans across the University and other input with six broad areas of strength in WMU research. Several members noted that they felt that the document represented a somewhat skewed view of the research focus of their areas. Obare invited input about points of pride and other documents which might help enhance the understanding of research strengths and emphasized that specific projects might be highlighted as talking points, so that the list is only part of the process in developing a clearer story to use in development, legislative affairs and other areas of the University.

### ACTION ITEM

#### *Cost Share Procedure and Flow Chart*

Obare presented a revised flow chart for how to solicit cost share for grant seekers because the process has been problematic and undocumented. The revised document was approved and thanks were given to Obare for creating a clear path for researchers.

## REPORTS

### *Council Chair – Steuer*

University Libraries is working to develop some new capacities for visualization and Steuer is working on an unofficial project looking at the geographic distribution of research at WMU. She requested that RPC members assist by filling out a test questionnaire to see how the data works.

### *Acting Dean of the Graduate College – Byrd-Jacobs*

Byrd-Jacobs was not in attendance.

### *Associate Vice President for Research – Obare*

Obare distributed a document with important upcoming dates for Spring Convocation, Discover Discovery sessions for faculty and students.

## ADJOURNMENT

Obare moved to adjourn, seconded by Ghantasala. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Submitted by Susan Steuer and Paul Solomon