

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL
Minutes of 15 March 2018

Members Present: Osama Abudayyeh, Steve Bertman, Chris Coryn, Martha Councell-Vargas, Anthony DeFulio, Muralidhar Ghantasala, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Katherine Joslin, James Kiddle (for Andre Venter), Terri Goss Kinzy, Sherine Obare, Jill Rowe, Paul Solomon, Susan Steuer, Patti Van Walbeck
Members Absent: Onur Arugaslan, Stevens Bonhomme, Damon Chambers, Willem Homan
Guest: Rick Gershon, (Faculty Senate President-elect)

The meeting was called to order at 2:34 p.m. after completion of the Support for Faculty Scholar Awards reviews.

A. Procedural Items

Acceptance of the Agenda

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

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Byrd-Jacobs, seconded by Van Walbeck, to approve the minutes of 8 February. Motion carried.

Announcements/Chair's Remarks

There were questions about changes to past minutes. Further concerns should be directed to Council Secretary Solomon. It was moved by Steuer to approve minutes as submitted; seconded by Coryn. Motion carried.

Steuer, in her capacity with the library, made an announcement: She and colleagues are looking to create a visual map for international research. She asked members to be part of beta testing for this new map.

B. Discussion/Information Item

1. Policy review schedule – Obare

In response to a request for information on existing policies in the Office of the Vice President for Research, a copy of this information is attached to these minutes. Kinzy noted that some things will be added, such as on-campus vs. off-campus rates and other issues that are more procedure than policy.

Kinzy asked that a review of the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award, SFSA, Faculty Research Travel Fund, and Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works policies be reviewed in the coming year. She mentioned that the Facilities and Administrative policy may also need review.

C. Action Items

1. Nominations for Emerging Scholar Award Committee

Steuer asked if there any volunteers for this committee. Councell-Vargas volunteered.

2. Recommend a mechanism for faculty to bring issues to RPC's attention for further investigation. (Charge #6)

Discussion was held about how our constituents can best be part of our process.

DeFulio suggested online forum/hub regarding potential RPC topics. Pros and cons of this idea were discussed.

Kinzy indicated that OVPR wants people to come to the office with problems and suggestions. A new work/communication flow chart is underway from OVPR.

Solomon recommended all members use multiple opportunities to communicate.

Obare noted a "clearing house" opportunity to problem solve through OVPR.

Steuer and others discussed pros and cons of seeking out all types of requests/complaints, etc.

Bertman suggested to draft a statement that explains the who/what of the RPC for benefit of faculty who do not know much of anything about the RPC.

Ghantasala suggested using college-wide meetings as fora.

Bertman suggested to send one RPC member to these meetings. In response to Steuer, Bertman and Ghantasala agreed to work on a statement with her via email prior to the next meeting.

3. Address funding obstacles to research and creative activities from the perspective of the faculty, consider diversity and inclusion issues as they relate to the role of RPC, and examine ways to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration to build compelling research proposals. (Charge #5)

Solomon discussed the "Broader Impact" emphasis on how research, teaching, and service should be connected.

Kinzy is looking for creative ideas to access new or additional research opportunities and broaden the definition of research.

Gershon questioned how ongoing research is surveyed.

Joslin noted the need to seek more ways for people to come together across disciplines. For example, offering \$500 to groups (departments or colleges). Also, giving money not to an individual, but to groups. In general, move to group rather than individuals.

There was continued discussion by members about ways to support common research interests.

Obare noted that in the early 2000s a small group of faculty independently started doing work in the area of materials science and engineering. Through fruitful collaborations, the network has expanded and now includes faculty in many departments including the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and the Haworth College of Business.

Steuer is seeking further discussion on ways to embolden faculty cohorts who want to work together.

Cuncell-Vargas, prior to departing the meeting, thanked the council for recent FRACAA funding.

Kinzy noted the wisdom of appropriated successful ideas from other institutions.

Joslin questioned how to empower/fund new initiatives. Kinzy responded that we find funds. If OVPR knows there's a group, then it can assist.

D. Reports

Council Chair

No report.

OVPR Report

Kinzy noted efforts to capture data on research submissions, awards, and expenditures and indicated the need to better capture some research funds.

Kinzy talked about the Higher Education Research and Development report that is submitted annually to the National Science Foundation.

Solomon discussed limits on "faculty capacity" in the College of Fine Arts, caused by budgetary factors. Kinzy noted the need for bigger philosophical ideas about supporting faculty and increasing faculty capacity. Is WMU making the right investment in research? She encouraged faculty to first pursue smaller grants. Methods need to increase visibility of research at WMU. There will be a speaker on research at every Board of Trustees meeting.

Rowe and Kinzy discussed mentorship, limits on assistants, and undergraduate research.

Acting Dean of the Graduate College – Byrd-Jacobs

Byrd-Jacobs noted 3-minute thesis presentations for spring 2018, with the most ever applications of 25. A biology major will represent WMU at a regional competition in Grand Rapids.

Research Day is April 12, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the East Ballroom of the Bernhard Center. Judges are being sought for poster projects.

E. Adjournment

Joslin moved to adjourn; Van Walbeck seconded. The motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Submitted by Paul Solomon, Secretary

