

University of Rhode Island
 Meeting of the Council for Research
 Monday, September 8, 2008
 URI Library, Conference Room A

Attendance:

Members Present: Vice President Peter Alfonso, S. Bradley Moran, Marcella Thompson, Jami Halpern, Cynthia Blanthorne, Nikhilesh Dholakia, Manbir Sodhi, Thomas Mather, Mark Wood, Karen Markin, Raymond Wright, Joelle Rollo-Koster, Betty Young, Harold Bibb, Clinton Chichester, Ginette Ferszt, Jane Miner, William Krieger, John King, Sookhyun Kim

Others Present: Andrew Harris, Jill Diehl

Members Absent: Graham Forrester

VP Peter Alfonso opened the meeting at 3:02pm.

The VP welcomed the Council Members and asked if they had any additions to the agenda. Hearing none, he read a passage from the Duties and Responsibilities previously sent to Council Members, stating that the Council’s main objectives “shall be to promote and facilitate research activities at the University, to ensure that research and other creative and scholarly activities are seen as being of equal importance with the instructional function of the University,” and “to see that the close relationship between the two is recognized. The Council shall attempt to achieve this objective by serving as the representative voice of the university research community and by seeking aggressively to improve in all ways possible the environment for research at URI.”

The VP reported that Article 4.57 calls for the VP for Research and Economic Development to call the initial meeting of the year, and to chair the meeting until a chairperson is elected by the Council, at which time the elected chairperson would chair the remainder of the meeting and call subsequent meetings at least twice each semester.

The VP asked each member to introduce themselves to the group, noting their research interests, and stating if they are a new member. A summary follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Research Interest</u>	<u>* Indicates New Member Status</u>
Nik Dohlakia	Technology innovation, market processes, consumer culture	
Jami Halpern	Student of Dr. Mark Wood’s research (alcohol prevention)	*
Cindy Blanthorne	Tax Comp Research, Legal Tax Research	*
Manbir Sodhi	Industrial Engineering, Mathematics	
Joelle Rollo-Koster	14 th Century Papacy History, History of Middle Ages	*
Andy Harris	AC Fellow mentored by President Carothers	Guest
Betty Young	Education; Science Education; How teachers learn to teach	*
Mark Wood	Alcohol prevention issues	
Harold Bibb	Bioscience; Graduate School Issues	* Ex-Officio
Clinton Chichester	Biomedical Science and Pharmacology	
Ginette Ferszt	Women in Prison	
Jane Miner	GSO Business Management	*
Will Krieger	Archaeology Theory and Practice	*
Karen Markin	Research Development	Ex-Officio

Jill Diehl	Council for Research Support; Communication Studies	Support Staff
S. Bradley Moran	Professor of Oceanography; Asst. VP for Research Admin.	* Ex-Officio
Tom Mather	Director of Center for Vector-Borne Disease (The Tick Guy)	
Sookhyun Kim	Textiles	
Marcella Thompson	Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety	*
	Child Bearing Women's Health	

(John King came in after introductions; Oceanography; Global Climate Change) New Chairperson

Selection of chairperson:

Two candidates were nominated and seconded: Mark Wood was nominated by Ginette Ferszt and seconded by Tom Mather; Manbir Sodhi was nominated by Mark Wood and seconded by Ginette Ferszt. Both candidates expressed that a more seasoned member would make a better chairperson (both of them are beginning their second year). Tom Mather stated that both were excellent candidates and were qualified for the position. Then John King walked in and was immediately nominated by Mark Wood and seconded by Manbir Sodhi. Karen Markin reminded the group that the chairperson also serves as a member of the Intellectual Property Committee, which meets monthly on a Friday. VP Alfonso asked the group how they wanted to proceed. It was decided to request a quick open vote by the membership. John King received the most (11) votes and was elected chairperson.

Chairman John King chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Meeting schedule for 2008 – 2009: as noted on agenda.

Minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the meetings of May 5, 2008 were approved pending a recommendation by the VP to change the word “five” to “six” (“Hot Teams”) on the first page of the Vice President’s Report.

Vice President’s Report: Update on Division of Research and Economic Development since the end of the spring semester:

Updates regarding previous discussions concerning Pre-Award deadlines:

The URI Commission on Research and Innovation, Science and Technology Advisory Council, which is part of the RI Economic Development Corporation, has concluded its report. Its goal is to enhance research at URI and will be released on October 7, 2008.

Expect a couple of major points to be addressed in this report.

Research dollars have remained flat for about 8 years at URI. The report will ask:

- 1) Why?
- 2) What could the State, Board of Governors, and University do to change this?

The report will also offer two big suggestions:

- 1) The State should appropriate \$100 million to URI for Research and Economic Development
- 2) Increase senior level administrative support from the President, Board of Governors, and General Assembly

These actions would help to address the worst financial situation in the history of the institution, as state appropriations to the University have slipped from \$85 million down to \$62 million, with another expected state budget cut of \$3-\$4 million more dollars in the near future.

Updates on progress made to address the Council for Research report on Pre-Award Sponsored Projects Review recommendations, as well as Post Award and Technology Transfer issues:

S. Bradley Moran was hired on June 23 as the Assistant Vice President for Research Administration. He oversees three offices: Research Development, Sponsored Projects Review, and Compliance.

Pre-Award concerns relating to online submissions will soon be addressed by hiring a Director to replace Gail Wing, who recently retired after a long leave of absence. Changes were made to the job description eligibility criteria, from a Master's degree to a Baccalaureate degree with additional years of experience. The Search Committee will consist of Bradley Moran, Susan Gomes, and Doreen Lawson. The Search is now beginning. Once the Director position is filled, the Sponsored Projects team will finally be fully staffed, thereby alleviating submissions concerns.

David Sadowski has been hired as the new Assistant Vice President for Intellectual Property Management and Commercialization. He will manage Technology Transfer and also serve as the Executive Director of the URI Research Foundation. He was the Deputy Director of NIH, holds a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering, has eleven years experience with the US Patent Office as a patent agent, and has submitted patent applications since 1991. He will start full-time in mid-October. VP Alfonso serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Research Foundation.

URI faculty members are required to disclose their inventions to the Intellectual Property Committee which determines whether the university chooses to retain IP right and file for a patent application. If so, the protected IP is transferred to the URI Research Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 organization, for commercialization. Royalty revenues are shared according to URI IP Policy, with a third each going to the inventor, the inventor's College, and the Research Foundation,...

A determination is yet to be made about whether to increase the existing .6 FTE tech transfer position to a full time position, or to continue with part-time support from FORESIGHT, or another combination of ideas.

The pending merger between Pre-Award and Post-Award developed more complications, due to incompatible PTAA and ACT Unions' employment qualification requirements. A state audit also concluded that some ACT positions were ranked too highly. This determination presented serious issues which have derailed the merger idea for at least the next year.

The focus will shift to reviewing existing staff positions, will help from Assistant VP Bradley Moran.

To support the Division of Research and Economic Development, URI altered the F&A (Facilities and Administration) allocation formula. The target was \$1 million; \$700,000 was received in FY09, most of which was needed to meet match requirements. To generate the \$1 million, \$12.5 million in total F&A would have been needed. The June FY08 grants report ended \$1.5 million in grant and contract awards over FY07.

The URI Research Foundation Board will have nine members from outside URI. There are now two Board members representing engineering disciplines, one each from Textron and General Dynamics. VP Alfonso is talking with two potential pharmaceutical representatives.

As of March 1, 2008, \$440,000 has been generated from license revenues, surpassing the total revenue foundation revenue from the entire previous fiscal year.

Other Business:

Chairman John King asked if monthly meetings for the Intellectual Property Committee would be adequate given the increased IP opportunities. VP Alfonso said that most of our inventions resulted from the 1980 Bayh / Dole Act, which gave researchers and universities rights to profit from IP developed as a result of federal grants. Researchers must disclose inventions to the University. Presently about 20 inventions are disclosed annually. Plans include helping faculty understand more about Tech Transfer. Many Engineering inventions are patented. VP Alfonso said there is very little state money available to pay for IP patent expenses, despite maintenance fees and an 18 month window for this. Annual support has been reduced from \$200,000 to \$150,000 and now to \$135,000, while expenses were \$221,000 last year.

Manbir Sodhi asked about a recent NY Times article that discussed how many universities are now losing money on patent applications while restraining their educational missions to protect Intellectual Property rights. Karen Markin offered to provide a copy of the article (See attached). VP Alfonso said that we were able to generate revenue of \$440,000 to cover our costs, which so far this year are \$300,000. He also said that our three-way split is generous to researchers, when compared with other universities. Only a small number of universities make a lot of money, but he felt we should make graduate students aware of the economic development potential, as it can be both economically and educationally beneficial. Our goal is to at least break even. VP Alfonso noted that many faculty have done well financially.

Assistant VP S. Bradley Moran reported that in addition to managing the Research Departments of Sponsored Projects, Research Development, and Compliance, he is also charged with fostering collaborative research among all academic disciplines at the University. He has been planning several activities to accomplish this, including the Research Seminar Series as well as some new initiatives.

Manbir Sodhi asked to have the Council review the recommendations that his subcommittee made last year when they reviewed the Pre-Award process. These were subsequently tabled due to the merger announcement. Now that the merger has been suspended, he asked that this issue be placed on the next agenda.

VP Alfonso said that he is planning a full day retreat for the Division of Research and Economic Development staff. He noted that there is no money to add staff, and there is also a hiring freeze at the university. Additionally, some positions that are funded through state appropriations are being scrutinized by Deans looking for overhead revenue sources. Sponsored Program Administration (SPA) needs to bring in \$12.5 million / year for overhead to generate \$1 million for annual expenses that fund all staff, as well as some payroll and purchasing personnel to administer grant funds. The question is how to get more money to Academic Affairs and not tap into SPA, as a percentage is being divided between Research and the Deans. He said he intends to look at salaries we shouldn't be paying and reallocating positions we currently have. Since the merger is not available, we need to look at other ways to cover our needs. Dean Ray Wright said that the Deans are not looking at overhead to cover reduction plans and stated that most overhead is committed by startup packages for new faculty. VP Alfonso gave an example that diving programs, needed for research mostly at CELS and GSO, but also at Arts and Sciences and Engineering, are having budget difficulties and are looking for support.

Manbir Sodhi asked that reallocation and recruitment deadlines be placed on the next agenda.

The issue of Post Doc benefits has been put off two or three times by Human Resources. The Council asked that Laura Kenerson and Cliff Katz be invited to the next Council meeting to discuss this important issue. Clinton Chichester reported a lack of clarity in the hiring process for postdocs, and has been promised a procedural document by HR nine months ago; he is still waiting. Also, changes have been made to internal payroll processes. Mark Wood said it may be premature to meet with them before the Ad-Hoc committee report is in hand (October 7).

John King (jking@gso.uri.edu) asked members to email him or Jill Diehl (jdiehl@mail.uri.edu) with agenda item requests.

Harold Bibb was asked to give a synopsis at the next meeting concerning the reorganization at the Graduate School and Provost Office. Harold reported that no formal reorganization has taken place, but said he will report on the few options being considered at our next meeting.

John King asked about whether the Research Center under investigation should be sanctioned, and asked about the Council's prerogative to review centers. It was reported that this particular center is "unofficial" and has never applied for center status. VP Alfonso reported that URI did nothing wrong in this case, and that the investigation relates to a former employee. Karen Markin provided John King with the list of Centers needing review (which will be copied for the full Council and distributed at the next meeting). She asked the Council to decide how they wished to proceed, noting that some of the Centers listed may not currently exist. This item will be added to the next agenda.

John King said that he would begin contacting Centers due for review if given a list of contacts for each. The Research Office will provide this.

Marcy Thompson asked if there is an anti-liability clause to protect Council for Research members if Centers don't act appropriately. The answer is that Centers are liable for their own actions. The Council for Research recommends for or against Center status, and may recommend for or against renewal of a Center's status, but it is the University and Board of Governors that grants final approval of a Center. The Center is responsible for complying with University policy.

Betty Young asked if there is a streamlined process for grant supported hiring processes. Council members said that there is currently a very long process due to several HR employee retirements. John King said that a flow chart with expectations does exist within HR and Affirmative Action.

Sookhyun Kim noted the Conflict of Interest Policy distributed via email to Council members and asked that this item be added to the next agenda.

Hearing no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Diehl
Grants & Contracts Specialist

PLEASE NOTE: The next meeting of the Council for Research will be held at 3pm on Monday, October 6th, in URI Library Conference Room A.