

University of Rhode Island
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council for Research
Monday, October 5, 2009
URI Library Conference Room A

Attendance:

Members Present: Chairman Mark Wood, Theodore Walls, Raymond Wright, Cynthia Thomas, Marcella Thompson, Joelle Rollo-Koster, Jane Miner, Betty Young, Anne M. Seitsinger, Kathleen Davis, Cathy Roheim, Kelsey Molloy, Karen Markin

Others Present: Jill Diehl

Members Absent: VP Peter Alfonso, Manbir Sodhi, Nikhilesh Dholakia, John King, Zahir Shaikh, Nasser Zawia, Clinton Chichester, S. Bradley Moran

Chairman Mark Wood opened the meeting at 3:03 pm.

The minutes of the September 21, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Vice President Report:

Karen Markin reported that neither the Vice President nor the Assistant Vice President were able to attend the meeting. As no report was forwarded to her, no Vice President report was given.

Discussion of Role of Council for Research:

Chairman Wood reported that under the prior administration structure of the Research Office, the Council for Research reported to the Vice Provost for Research and Outreach. With the new Division of Research & Economic Development, that is no longer the case. Chairman Wood read from the Faculty Senate Manual concerning the Council for Research:

“Its 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. Specifically the Council shall:

- a) provide information to the President in response to all inquiries regarding research from the Board of Governors and the State Legislature;
- b) seek to identify all problems which hinder research efforts at URI and provide recommendations on their correction, or apply pressure to make needed changes;

- c) upon request, advise all campus groups and offices on matters relating to research;
- d) review and recommend policies for the management of research affairs at URI;
- e) review and recommend programs to solicit research funding for URI and participate in them;
- f) serve as the advisory council for the Vice President for Research and Economic Development;
- g) promote comprehensive understanding of the notion of research in order to enhance the well-being of all creative scholarly activities at URI;
- h) submit to the Faculty Senate recommendations for changes in research policy; and
- i) submit an annual report of its activities to the Faculty Senate and the President.

Additionally, the Council solicits and allocates annual faculty grant awards to facilitate research. These faculty grants may support faculty salary and fellowships, student support, operating expenses, travel, and equipment.

Based on these mandates in the University Manual, the Chairman noted that the Council not only serves to advise the VP for Research and Economic Development, but has a much broader role. Any changes to these mandates would need to be passed by the Faculty Senate, as the Council for Research is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. The Council indicated interest in reviewing these policies as suggested by VP Alfonso.

F&A Reallocation:

Chairman Wood said that the VP for Research and Economic Development felt that reviewing Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) and Facilities & Administration (F&A) overhead issues may not be the best use of the Council's time, as the Board of Governors sets these policies and they are already in the final stages. Discussion noted that F&A allocations have a demonstrable link to the success of research efforts, and that the BOG is advised by the institution. The Council agreed that, as charged with the nine mandates previously stated from the University Manual, it seems prudent for them to review these issues to advance research at the University.

Discussion reflected on the VP report from the previous meeting regarding distribution of overhead revenue after SPA costs, which stated that 55% goes to the Deans of the Colleges that generated the award; 10% to the Office of the Provost; 15% to the Office of the VP of Research & Economic Development; 15% to the General Fund of the University; and 5% to the Office of the President. Members said they would like to see a breakdown of expenditures for SPA. Jane Miner reported that after deducting SPA costs, the actual funds returned to Deans at the Colleges is about 32%. Dean Wright said he thought it was actually in the mid 20⁰% range. Jane responded that percentages recently increased, although each College seems to have a different distribution formula. Council members asked where this new increase came from, and wondered if it may be coming from the President's Office. Jane reported that she has the full distribution table broken out by college, and offered to email it to the Council (see attached). Joelle Rollo-Koster

expressed dismay that there does not seem to be a uniform University policy for such distributions.

Dean Wright reported that the College of Engineering keeps 40 cents on the dollar and returns 60 cents to the department to be split 50/50 to support faculty and department needs. Betty Young commented that additional research may be inspired if more funding is returned to the people who successfully write and implement their grants. Dean Wright noted that start-up packages can mortgage colleges for three to five years, but can also bring talented people to the University. Other concerns voiced were questions about where the money goes when a course buyout triggers a per course instructor to be hired at a lesser rate; 3/3 course load policies that prevent more senior people to afford buyouts, placing faculty at a disadvantage to others whose schools have 1/1 policy buyouts; acronymic lingo; different models and lack of recognition of humanities research.

Jane Miner offered to explain the acronyms. Karen Markin noted that there is a BOG policy manual. Chairman Wood asked Council members to think about solutions and email him their thoughts and recommendations about policies for research, Intellectual Property, and the research and innovations section of the Provost's Academic Plan. He will then schedule future discussions with the Council for Research and VP Alfonso.

A motion was made by Kathleen Davis and seconded by Joelle Rollo-Koster to review the Academic Plan with an eye on research. It was approved unanimously. Chairman Wood asked that a link to the updated version of the Provost's Academic plan be submitted with the minutes, which follows: http://www.uri.edu/provost/documents/academic_plan_draft.pdf

The Council noted the Research Office's willingness to record faculty awards if their colleges submit them in a compilation summary format that is easy to record and report. This effort will offer a broader view of research by recognizing scholarly activities and preventing these other research efforts from falling through the cracks. Contracts, fellowships, and research that offers long-term value to the University are all considerations that need to be quantified and credited. The importance of reporting these other types of research was reiterated. Members commented that VP Alfonso said that he takes a broad view of research and scholarly activities.

Betty Young asked if Assistant VP S. Bradley Moran could update the Council about what kind of initiatives are being undertaken to initiate and improve research, enhance infrastructure, and address problems with the post-award processes, policy structures, medical care, and purchasing. Concerns voiced were that not all colleges provide assistance from business managers and SRGA's to help with grants; there is insufficient post award support once grants are received; difficult purchasing processes seem to be in constant flux. Council members remarked that now there is great support provided to them to help researchers receive grants, but once they get the awards, support is lacking. Members reiterated the "need to marry pre and post awards."

Ted Walls commented that the IT infrastructure is divorced from research support, and that IT support seems to be available only for an additional price, e.g. charging for server maintenance. He suggested that IT support for grant funded projects be merged with the research enterprise.

Chairman Wood summarized five potential areas of concern to be addressed this year (besides the Center reviews and finalizing the revision of Center review policies begun last year) by the Council for Research, as follows:

- * Provost's Academic Plan (research and innovations section)
- * Post Award processes
- * IT Support
- * Clarification of the Council's scope of duties and relevant acronyms
- * F&A reallocations

Schedule for Review of Centers / Institutes:

In addition to the areas of concern above, there are 23 research centers needing review by the Council for Research this year. The new application form with required signatures will be forwarded to them as soon as the draft flow chart has been modified by the review subcommittee (Mark, Marcy, Ted, Jane, Clinton) and approved by the Provost Office. Upon receipt of the signed applications, the Council will develop a review schedule. Members requested that a deadline date be added to the Center application, and to disallow lengthy presentations.

Other Business:

A suggestion was made to review the Council for Research's Faculty grant programs applications. This item will be added to the next month's agenda. Last year's applications will be emailed prior to the meeting to give members time to review them and recommend changes at the meeting. Council members recommended that funding for this grant program be increased next year. FY0910 funding totaled only \$90,000, of which \$60,000 was provided by the Office of the VP for Research & Economic Development, \$20,000 from the Office of the Provost, and \$10,000 from RI Sea Grant.

Anne Seitsinger expressed concern that the grant award report distributed last month by VP Alfonso listed \$0 for the School of Education, despite a large three year award they had received. She spoke with Mary Kate DeMarco who indicated that multi-year awards made in prior years are only credited during the first year that the award is received, contrary to the discussion at the meeting. Chairman Wood reported that others (including the Graduate School and Feinstein Hunger Center) had also expressed concerns in the past that their awards were not listed correctly in the report.

The meeting adjourned at 4:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Diehl
Grants and Contracts Specialist

The next meeting of the Council for Research is scheduled for 3pm on Monday, November 2, 2009 in Conference Room A, second floor of the URI Library.