

Annual Report 2008-2009
July 1, 2009

The Research Committee has 13 regular members and 3 liaisons from Administration, Policy Committee and AAUP-AFT.

During the past academic year, the Committee met monthly from September to May, except in December and April. The Committee undertook two major tasks during the year: i) analysis of responses from the University-wide Research Issue Survey and ii) formulation of recommendations for improving Wayne State's National Research Ranking.

1. University-wide Research Issue Survey

It was recognized over the years that many problems existed on campus hindering the progress of faculty conducting research. A survey to identify some of these problems was launched in April of 2008 at a Zoomerang site (<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227PBAPEWFM>). A subcommittee of four members was assembled to analyze the data received. There were more than 400 responses. Major weaknesses pointed out by faculty included inadequate internal support for research, complicated and erroneous accounting procedures and an ineffective sponsored program administration. The Committee made several recommendations to relieve these problems in five major areas: budget issues, managing research accounts, purchasing policies, sponsored program administration and human investigation committee forms. A power-point presentation was made to the Academic Senate on February 4, 2009 and a formal report was sent to Senate Policy Committee in March, 2009. (In the interim, it was noted that the SPA had diligently worked to develop new electronic mechanisms to assist researchers in grant management). The Committee made a special request to Policy Committee that a copy of the final report be posted on Pipeline.

2. WSU's national ranking in research

The Committee continued its study of the precipitous drop of WSU's national research ranking between 2002 and 2007. In 2002, WSU's ranking stood at 61st among all U.S. universities and at 41st among public institutions. By 2006, WSU dropped to 75th and 52nd respectively, although the ranking moved up two ticks to 73rd and 50th in 2007. The Office of the Vice President for Research attributed the decline to the discrepancy between WSU and other research institutions in institutional spending on research, a fact supported by results of the University-wide Research Issue Survey reported above. Between 2002 and 2006 when WSU's national research ranking dropped 14 places, our total institutional research spending stagnated and remained within a narrow range of 200 to 220 million dollars while other institutions continued to invest in their research programs. The conclusion was that the Board of Governors and the administration must recognize the importance of research in the future of WSU and make meaningful investment in WSU's research enterprise. The Committee made several recommendations to improve the research atmosphere and to improve WSU's national research ranking in five major areas: culture change to promote research, research support and merit incentives for research faculty, upgrade research core services, internal and external communications and post-doctoral training programs. A power-point presentation was made to the Academic Senate on April 8, 2009 and a formal report was in preparation to be submitted to Senate Policy Committee in the summer. (In the interim, it was noted that some improvements had occurred in the OVPR this year with some increase in funding for faculty development and launching of a

smaller scale post-doctoral program).

3. Six members of the Research Committee participated in reviewing Undergraduate Research and Creative Project proposals in April for the Honors College and the Provost's office. Each judge evaluated about 15 to 25 applications.
4. The Chair thanked all committee members for their hard work throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted

Harley Tse
Chair, Research Committee