Academic Senate Research Committee Minutes April 21, 2022

Via Zoom

Time: 3:03 pm – 4:09 pm

Members present: Noreen Rossi (chair), Alan Dombkowski, Krishnarao Maddipati, Joseph Roche, Shirley Papuga, Robert Harr, Wanda Gibson Scipio, Carol Miller, Ramzi Mohammad, Le Yi Wang, Shane Perrine, Arun Iyer, Andrew Fribley, Lance Heilbrun, Edward Cackett, Hossein Yarandi, Timothy Stemmler (liaison), Robert Reynolds

Members absent with notice: Christian Bozeman (liaison); Karen MacDonell (liaison), Jennifer Lewis, Tamara Bray,

Guests: James Wurm

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm. The minutes of the previous meeting were corrected and approved.

The meeting began with Mr. Wurm from C&IT.

Mr. Wurm introduced himself. He is Senior Director for Academic Research Technology at C&IT. This is a relatively new department after the consolidation of computer support. Prior to this there was no group specifically dedicated to this task other than the High-Performance Computing Grid. He had been at the School of Medicine as IT Director before the consolidation. This is to be a one-stop for research support: Windows, Linux, network security, cloud support, Cayeus, high performance research support, AWS, co-location of services, data protection.

He asked for feedback from faculty and encouraging communication, even come to him first if need be to help with other Departments.

Dr. Rossi opened with a question re: computer purchases that may be unique to research that may not be Windows 10. Mr. Wurm responded that they do requests for computers that need to interface with Windows 7 or XP on a regular basis.

Dr. Heilbrun asked what is the “N” stand for in CNIT? Mr. Wurm said to clarify that it is C&IT, and that the “N” is put in there extraneously.

Professor Harr commented that recent interactions with C&IT have been very good especially with Pat Grossman. Dr. Harr participated in getting proposals written and funded for fiber and grid projects. He mentioned the complaints about purchasing of computers for research and overseeing the software, namely, that C&IT personnel want to manage the computer. Sometimes doing this hinders the research. When a system is designed/configured for data acquisition it is not conducive to have the memory wiped every night. The purchasing issues have been due to waiting times. For example, getting an older style printer cable has been very delayed even when the purchase is small amounts. There are limitations in purchasing given the packages of the standard office computers. Are the rules inflexible? Or is there room for researchers able to purchase other configurations, items, brands, that are more conducive to their research. Mr. Wurm responded that this is exactly why they have organized this new department so that faculty can come to them with their specialized needs. A standard desktop does not need to be specialized. If anyone has a special need, he asked that they contact him. Dr. Harr emphasized that several research computers/lab computers may look like standard

desktop computers but are not the same thing, nor are they laptops. They often have to connect through old types of connections (serial, GPIB, old parallel ports) that have disappeared in modern machines but the equipment is older and needs these special connections to interface and get data.

Mr. Wurm addressed the purchasing re: Dell and Apple so as to integrate the computers into the fleet of computers for the University. They manage more than 10,000 computers. He asked that Dell be considered first because of the arrangement, even to ship the same day and support. There are supply chain issues now also delaying purchases. He wants to order more high-end equipment so they can provide more quickly. If there is something that is needed from a different source he wants to know about it. He reminded the members that there are also some government security standards that need to be met. NIH and NSF have hinted may be going that route as well. There is an option for self-support to buy specialized needs. That is not out of the question.

Dr. Harr commented that he was gratified to hear that but that in the actual practice this may not always occur. For example, researchers to advance teaching labs. A lot of experiments use older computers with older interfaces that have had a lot of investment over the years though student lab fees. Since the move to the SILT building, there was a lot of trouble getting things up and running there. New computers were put in place, but the software does not always work on them and need older Windows operating systems. Is there some what to take them off the network and run them some other way? Dr. Harr and Mr. Wurm will get together to discuss this further.

Dr. Dombowski asked whether Mr. Wurm's team was responsible for taking care of the high-performance grid. Are there any plans to expand the users? Any plan to implement Galaxy for high through-put genomics data, but the external servers are very slow? Is there any intent to develop our own local implementation? In the past, there was concern about this requiring intense "hands on" involvement so would not have the resources to do this. Any plans to address this?

Mr. Wurm: Our high-performance computing is very old, being greater than 10 years old. A faculty advisory group has been assembled to get ideas of things that are needed. The first topic is the status of the high-performance computing and what is needed - more cores, more memory, CPU, more staff. Compared with other comparable universities we have less staff to support. Research and security were both understaffed. He would also like to add capacity and invited individuals to provide information as to programs that need to run. Dr. Dombowski said he would contact Mr. Wurm who also asked if there are ideas regarding ways to fund C&IT since most of their funding is one-time funds, sometimes general funds, but open to ideas for other funding sources.

Dr. Stemmler asked to bring Catherine Gurdsel to bring under the umbrella for this and bioinformatics and the cores.

Dr. Rossi brought up that Policy was going to be meeting with Dr. Lanier about IDC and how much of the IDC was going to research infrastructure. Mr. Wurm mentioned that he thought that C&IT got zero of the IDC. Now, it may be that there is a charge for storage, computing etc.

Dr. Maddipatti asked when we buy a computer and software, how much control does C&IT exerts on that computer. Mr. Wurm responded that it varies some vendors do not want others to

work on the computer. He is now working on some computer standards and policies (small “p”) for how things should work and how to address the special needs. Dr. Maddipatti asked if we need to C&IT permission first. Mr. Wurm asked that the faculty reach out to C&IT first so that they can assist especially with security or other issues that may arise.

Dr. Fribley in the Chat: Are there any rules/recommendations for these questions? Is there a website to go to for these?

They are behind on getting such a website on line but he is working on it, including language to drop into grants regarding computing resources that are available.

Dr. Fribley also asked if there are new rules for purchasing, limits, sources. Mr. Wurm said not to purchase a computer until contacting C&IT first since they have funds to buy a computer. If you are a regular faculty member you are entitled to a computer. If there is extra RAM or other configuration needs, reach out to him first.

He invited all member reach out about issues.

Dr. Rossi thanked Mr. Wurm.

Dr. Rossi then introduced Dr. Amanda Bryant-Friedrich, Dean of the Graduate School. Self-introductions by the members of the committee ensued.

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich said that we speak about graduate students but we need to make the distinction of doctoral students, masters students, and certificate students. When we talk about doctoral students we need to think about professional doctorates and those getting the classical Ph.D. and the Ed.D. So, it makes it more complicated since all the designations fall under the Graduate School. Masters programs are under the jurisdiction of the academic colleges with limited involvement of the graduate school.

My first priority as Dean is that the doctoral students are taken care of, that the University provides a degree in that area that is recognized globally as an approved degree in that area. This is the reason for the guidelines for leadership and for including graduate faculty membership.

Funding: The vast majority of programs have stipends as well as tuition to support students. WSU also has a package for health insurance for the students. She noted that she came from U. Toledo where health insurance was not included in the package for doctoral students, and that creates a disaster.

Different funding designations: GTA, GRA, GSA.

GRA is likely the one that the Research Committee is likely most interested in since these doctoral students are funded to do research for faculty in the departments. The stipend that is given to a GRA will come from the University or a grant that supports the research in that area. A lot of people in STEM think that GRAs are all supported by grants, but that is not the case. Not all doctoral GRAs are the same across the University since not all programs have the same ability or capacity to acquire research funding.

So, you have students doing research. Minimum stipend is ~$21,000 for any doctoral student. The tuition piece is paid by either the graduate school or the grant source. One of the issues is that people are struggling to pay for the tuition from their grants because the tuition for graduate

students can be pretty high. Also, the health insurance is to be covered which is a big piece. The graduate student has to pay fees; they have to give a portion of that back to the University as fees. We do not want the doctoral student working at other jobs. The graduate students are now bringing up the issue that they are not earning a living wage.

GSA students are unionized. Their unionized salary sets the minimum stipend that can be given to the student. They are given tuition (based on credit hours rather than dollar amount because graduate tuition increases). Those funds reside in the Graduate School for all GTAs and GSAs. So, if a college has 25 GTAs, the Graduate School provides the tuition for those students. Likewise, for GSAs. The stipends come from the colleges or programs that are hiring the students. It can be a tutoring stipend. The stipend for tutoring would come from the school/college but the tuition would come from the Graduate School.

Rumble fellowships are given to colleges. The colleges decide to whom the Rumbles go. There has been an historical model for distributing the Rumbles which she thinks is less than equitable. The Rumbles pay stipend and tuition for the student. They have been broken up into different categories.

Postdoctoral fellows' funding is not administered through the Graduate School but is responsible for the administration of hiring.

Scholarships, fellowship, and awards: When you give someone a fellowship or scholarship you cannot expect them to work. When you given the student an award, you may require work.

There are Dean's diversity fellows; some tuition covering awards at the master's level.

Dr. Fribley asked "what is a Rumble?"

Dr. Harr commented that there is concern that our model for paying tuition puts us out of line with other universities, makes us appear expensive, and puts us out of line for NSF and other funding agencies. Is there another model? Is there an option if the student is supported on a grant, the tuition would be covered (that was some years ago). Where have these options gone?

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich: There are many different models. Her previous university, any graduate student covered by external support paid their own tuition given the financial situation there.

She mentioned that faculty who are getting grants funded and training graduate students that those individuals are rewarded in some way. Thus, we need to support those who train our doctoral students. Some schools support the students more and are more expensive to support a doctoral student and some support less. What we can do to figure out what is actually happening at WSU especially with the changes in CFO. The CFO has a lot to say about graduate student funding because it is expensive but needs to be financially sustainable. There are individuals saying we should use the indirect costs to give it back to the investigator, but there are different places where the IDC is utilized. She has seen two proposals and has a meeting in 1 week with the School of Medicine where she will hear another proposal.

Dr. Reynolds: Besides, Ph.D. research can be done by a master's student or even undergraduate students. We would like to attract them into the graduate programs. How is the graduate school going to support those avenues?

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich: A lot of programs bring in masters students to have them in the pipeline for doctoral programs. She would like to see the programs have a more structured and focused way of doing just that. There are multiple types of masters' students. Some have an idea that they want to have a doctorate. We need find a way to support them, to bring them into the culture. Other masters' students come because they need the education for promotion at their job or for a different career trajectory, but support there would cut into the bottom line.

A vision for A-grade would make it more accessible and students that are not as well prepared but to have an opportunity when they realize later on in their undergraduate trajectory that they want to go on to graduate school.

Ramzi Mohammed: Our Cancer Biology program only supports Ph.D. students. We do not have funds to support a master's student (I have a master's student from Africa). Can we approach your office for help?

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich: Basically, the most the graduate school can do is cover the tuition. This can be important because if they are from Africa, they are international, so their tuition is huge, but we do not provide a stipend.

Dr. Rossi: So, it seems that there will be a change in the landscape and rules as you, the provost, and the CFO meet. Is there any input that we can provide? What do you suggest?

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich: I need to get Graduate Council and Associate Deans. We will need to survey research active faculty since there are different ways of getting and using funds. We would like to do this by end of summer. There will be a survey and she encouraged members to send her emails.

Another question was raised: The 30 hours for dissertation seems high.

Dr. Bryant-Friedrich: We entertained and passed a proposal to reduce the hours for a Ph.D. to 24 credits. It is working through the system. Apparently, everything takes so long. It does affect the finances, so cutting off 6 credit hours cuts off 6 credit hours of income.

Dr. Harr: That would greatly change the costs on the grant as well.

Dr. Rossi: Thanked Dr. Bryant-Friedrich and wished all a good summer.

The meeting ended at 4:09 pm.