

Annual Report 2007-2008
June 26, 2008

The Research Committee has 13 regular members and 3 liaisons. During the past year, the Committee met monthly from October to April, except in December and January. The Committee undertook three major tasks, completed two and with one on-going into the summer.

1. University-wide survey of faculty to identify problems related to research
It was recognized over the years that many problems existed on campus relating to facilitation of faculty conducting research activities. The Committee decided to identify some of these problems in an effort to improve the research environment at WSU. A subcommittee of 4 members was formed in November to design a survey questionnaire for this purpose. After several revisions with input from the full Committee, the questionnaire was finalized in April and was launched at a Zoomerang site (<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227PBAPEWFM>) on April 14, 2008. The survey questionnaire consisted of 6 sections with a total of 71 questions ranging from departmental to university-wide issues. A copy of the questionnaire was maintained at the Senate office. The survey was closed on May 31, 2008. As of this writing, there were 417 entries received. Results would be extracted from the Zoomerang website and analyzed. This process is on-going and would be extended into late summer/early fall because some subcommittee members were out of the country for the summer. A report will be made to the Senate Policy Committee.
2. Undergraduate Summer Stipend Awards
With money derived from faculty who chose to make their AAUP union due as contributions to an educational fund, the Provost's office launched a new Undergraduate Summer Stipend Award program this year. The Committee was charged with reviewing and selecting the top applications for funding. In mid-March, the Committee received 90 applications for review and completed the task in three weeks. All scores and 26 selected applications were forwarded to the Provost's office on April 4, 2008. Subsequently, the Committee was informed that the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) on campus had a similar summer research program that also awarded stipends for participating undergraduates. The pool of applicants overlapped, with the possibility of overlapping awards. In the future, if the Committee were to be asked to review applications for the Provost's office, the Provost's office would need to coordinate the process with the OUR.
3. WSU's national ranking in research
Institutional research activities in the form of total spending on research are tracked and ranked by two granting agencies, the NIH and the NSF. In 2002, WSU's national research ranking stood at 61st among all U.S. universities and at 41st among public institutions. By 2006, WSU's rankings dropped to 75th and 52nd respectively. Senate Policy Committee thus charged the Research Committee with looking into the reasons for the decline and offering suggestions on things that can be done to reverse it. The Chair initiated the process by meeting with Dr. Hilary Ratner, Vice President of Research, and Dr. Dan Walz, Associate Dean of Research at the School of Medicine. Subsequently on February 18, 2008, Dr. Ratner organized a Research Summit presentation for several WSU committees with responsibilities related to research. Many Senate Research Committee members attended the Summit. On the basis of the information gathered, the Committee had in depth

discussions of the issues over a three-month period and made a list of recommendations aimed at strengthening the research capability of the University. A report was assembled and would be submitted to Senate Policy Committee in the summer.

Besides the major tasks listed above, the Committee also engaged in discussions of the Provost's Salary Incentive Plan during the early part of the school year. 2008 would be the final year of the 3-year pilot plan and the Committee endorsed its continuation. The discussion did not lead to setting recommendations for the Provost due to time constraints. This work should be resumed by the 2008-2009 Committee.

The Committee also served as a liaison to encourage direct communication between some faculty of the School of Education and the Human Investigation Committee (HIC), emanating from the complexity of HIC forms that some faculty found difficult to comply with. Through contact with Dr. Dorothy Nelson, Associate Vice President of Research overseeing the activities of the HIC, the Committee had effected direct communication between the HIC and faculty of concern to resolve the problems.

Respectfully Submitted

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Chair, Research Committee