

Minutes of Senate Research Committee Meeting  
16 October 2009

Present: David Cinabro, Maria Ferreira, David Kessel, Boris Mordukhovich, Jianjun Wang, Jeffrey Withey, Harley Tse, Fred Pearson.

Absent with Notice: Robert Arking (AAUP-AFT Liaison), Rodger MacArthur, David Thomas.

Absent: Ramona Benkert, Joseph Dunbar (Administrative Liaison), Adnan Hussain (Student Council Liaison).

Guests: Jim Barbret, Tej Mattoo, Frederic Pearson.

Bob Arking is on travel. Next month we will talk about Academic Misconduct.

Jim Barbret spoke on some projects having to do with grants. First post award documents are being imaged and being sent to PI's. Later they will appear on the Research Dashboard. There were many questions about e-prop (aka COEUS Lite) and the Research Dashboard. The option to add co-PI's to the Dashboard will be available soon. More work will be needed to add internal accounts. It should be easy to be able to avoid early submission for grants that have start and end submission dates. Salaries in e-prop have to be entered by hand and this is unlikely to change. A future feature will be to track and attach intermediate and final reports. Jim was asked about Effort Reporting. An RFP has gone out for a software system to manage and gather effort data, which will be a big improvement over the almost non-existent effort that we have now. Jim left when we had no more questions for him.

We began to talk about how the University supports research.

Maria spoke with VP for Research Ratner. She buried Maria in data pointing to the existing Strategic Plan which seeks to strengthen research, mentioned the many new initiatives that support research (Bridge Funding, Post-Docs, Research Enhancement Program, REP in Arts and Humanities, and the just announced Research Incubator), has recently made it easier for externally funded non-faculty researcher to get health coverage, has increased support for research at the schools and colleges, has reorganized SPA and Research Administration, has various Task Forces to improve research, is working to increase ties to Tech Town and promote collaborative efforts, is working on new research buildings for the Medical School and the Life Sciences, and is generally trying to increase research productivity. For the future she wants to help hire more full time faculty and invest in research support.

Maria also spoke with the Associate Dean for Research in the College of Education whose job is to support research in the college. He does this by making the faculty aware of grant opportunities and seeks to aid both internal and external collaborative efforts. The main work is in grant management where staff helps with pre-awards (one person) and post-award (four people).

They also make available travel funds and recently have begun giving summer support for junior faculty. Research efforts in the college have grown much over the last 20 years.

Maria wrote up her findings and shared them with the committee.

Jeff spoke with chairs of Basic Science Departments in the Medical School. There were many points divided into good and bad. Starting with the good. The new bridge funding program is good, but has requirements that are rather restrictive. More things like this with more flexibility would be welcome is a THEME. There were many more bad things. Maintenance and Facilities are very poor and seem to be unable to prioritize. Technical support for research is poor with DNA sequencing being a notable example. This is a THEME in that David Cinabro heard this a bunch on the main campus. The yearly research incentive program is usually way too narrow and following last year's trend; better would be a broader, more flexible program.

Is the OVPR bloated? The Med School Dean is not enough of an advocate for research. Tech transfer is disastrously bad. The faculty incentive program is not working. Evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure should focus more on research.

Jeff wrote up his findings and shared them with the committee.

Jianjun spoke to Ken Palmer, the Med School Vice Dean for Human Resources, Ken Lee, the Associate Dean for Finance, and Larry Grossman, the Director of the Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics, in the Med School. A THEME is that research does not seem to get the attention it deserves from a good fraction of the administration. Work here is focused on recruiting, training, and retaining high quality faculty.

A great deal of effort is made on the latter. More focus is needed to integrate the basic and clinical sides of the Med School as this will be a focus at the NIH. Post-docs and journal clubs are being used to try to shift the focus of the PhD more towards research and less towards clinical. Future efforts are to increase internal support and fund raise to set up endowed chairs to reward high performing researchers. How to reward high performing researchers is a THEME with the topic of retention and endowed chairs coming up more than once.

We ran out of time to hear from others and will pick this up again at our next meeting. Notably David Kessel spoke with the Provost and David Cinabro spoke with the President. Boris mentioned that he will talk to the Dean of CLAS. Reoccurring THEMES are starting to emerge:

- 1) We have woefully inadequate technical support for research.
- 2) Incentives for high performing researchers have to be rethought.
- 3) Programs to support research need to be more flexible. Existing programs are often far too restrictive to have broad impact.
- 4) Research priorities do not seem to get the attention they deserve by the service orientated parts of the University such as the Facilities and Purchasing.

We next meet on 13 November.