

**Minutes of Academic Senate Research Committee
18 November 2010**

Present: Cinabro, Avrutsky, Benkert, Biswas, Lanza, MacArthur, Mordukhovich, Stemmler, Wang, Whittum-Hudson, Wurm, Arking

Absent with Notice: Ferreira, Thomas, Tse, Wildman, Shamoun

We dove into a discussion of Research Incentives, motivated by Rodger telling us that the Policy Committee was meeting with the President's Cabinet later in the today to discuss the report on Research Incentives that was submitted to President Noren this summer. Apparently the President and Policy Committee like the report. Joe reviewed the history, noting the difficulty in finding something that would be satisfactory to all with the very different research funding environments between main campus and the med school. The compromise arrived at, free tuition for GRA (attractive on the main campus) and return of salary over a 25% threshold (attractive in the Med School), was a compromise. A major concern by the VP for Research was how to pay for the incentives, but a thorough analysis showed that there would be little impact from taking the money from indirect costs that would otherwise go to the General Fund. New Provost Brown found the proposal overly complex and thought it would be better for Deans to propose their own individual school research incentives. A few things were left vague. For example exactly what a "unit" is reflecting the difficulty of comparing research activities across the diverse University. This is where we are now.

Cinabro spoke with Associate Dean Greenberg in CLAS. She said that CLAS liked free tuition for GRA's, reflecting their concern that our costs per graduate student are high due to the high fringe rate and the inclusion of tuition. They have no funds to incentivize research their modest plans are to give out research recognition awards, in parallel with the teaching recognition award, and restructure the current teaching buy out plan. If money appeared then they would like to forgive GRA tuition as in the proposed plan.

Ivan reported that Engineering likes the proposed incentive plan and are exploring implementing it within their school. Money from the general fund would be helpful.

In the Med School, things are not so clear. The budget is being restructured such that the current proposal has salary savings being sent back to Departments leaving Deans with little to work with for research incentives. Until this is decided not much will be done with incentives.

Abe described the plan in the Business School, where money comes from differential tuition. Summer salaries are given based on faculty proposals. The new idea is to reward those who publish in "A" journals with a sliding scale of reward depending on journal quality and time since publication. The plan is still being developed.

A general headache in these plans is deciding who gets incentive rewards. For example if it were only based on external funding, and all of CLAS compared with each other, then all rewards would go to folks in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics who have many opportunities for external funding, while none would go to History, English, etc. where there are few opportunities for external funding. How this circle is squared is one of the great difficulties for a research incentive plan.

On the other hand someone in the Med School noted that our current policies discourage multiple grants, but an incentive program like the one proposed this summer make it much more attractive to try for more than one grant.

The committee chair would like to see us continue to push on this issue. While the provost has charged the deans to come up with research incentive plans, deans can always find ways to not spend money in support of individual faculty. This was part of the reason the old research incentive program collapsed as deans began to opt out leaving nothing else in place. Thus the deans need push from below, our faculty committee members, besides the provost pull from above to develop research incentive plans. It is difficult to know how it all turns out. There are not large sums of money sloshing around the Departments and Colleges to use for Research Incentives, thus a University wide plan drawing on the general fund is probably needed for a meaningful incentive. The committee chair and Joe also noted that our current budget structure does not include explicit funds for research incentives and that it is not possible to track what happens to funds that are generated by research indirect costs.

We approved the minutes from September and October. Some notes are that the committee chair is meeting regularly with an Associate VP for research to discuss matters arising during our meetings, the plan for alterations to restricted research policies are progressing slowly, and the Graduate School executive committee is working on new guidelines on publishing graduate student theses.

Joe tells us that FP&M does not hate us, but are simply just getting started on implementing changes recommended by the report from this summer. Joe is actually chairing an over site committee that has not yet met. He suggested revisiting this early next year.

Limits on Procard purchases have been raised. Joan Gossman, director of purchasing, will appear before the full Senate in December.

A couple of comments were made about troubles in OVPR and SPA. Apparently the Technology Transfer team has been gutted, and folks in the Med School, especially clinicians whose grants are maintained by employees of the practice plan rather than the University, are having trouble with Dashboard. The chair will investigate.

Finally we briefly went over the How The University Supports Research report. The goal is to finish this soon. A few suggestions and comments were made. The chair will make these changes, send the revised draft to the committee and ask for final comments by 1 December.

Meeting day and time will change for the Winter Semester. A poll will be sent out once the Committee Chair has some idea of his teaching schedule next semester.