

Wayne State University
Academic Senate
Research Committee Minutes
March 22, 2011

Present: Cinabro, Biswas, Greteback, Kreipke, Lanza, MacArthur, Thomas, Wang, Wildman, Wurm, Dunbar

Absent With Notice: Mordukhovich, Stemmler, Whittum-Hudson

We approved the minutes of the February meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for 19 April.

The chair reported on the Policy Committee meeting of the day before where the move of the Computer Science Department (CS) to the College of Engineering (CoE) was discussed. Basically there is no significant opposition to the move, but there is much complaint that the move is being done hastily and without any documentation or written plans. The most important issue is what sort of degrees will be offered after the move. The suggestion is that there will be at least two degrees: BA in CS offered under the College of Liberal Arts and Science and BS in CS offered under CoE. This is similar to the offerings now with a BA degree that requires less math than the BS degree.

The research issue of Promotion and Tenure requirements, which are actually more rigorously detailed by CS than any department in CoE, and thus those currently on the tenure track in CS will not see any change in P&T factors. The issue of resources devoted to supporting research in CS has still not been adequately addressed, but such resources are not large and the impact on CLAS is likely to be small. This should be made concrete.

The Provost pointed out that he wanted to put CS in CoE as he thought this is where it could best thrive, and he wanted to reduce the size and complexity of CLAS which is difficult to manage. The result of the meeting is that the Dean of Engineering and the Chair of CS will produce a written report which will 1) give rationale for the move, 2) describe the curriculum issue and lay out the plans for the new degree offerings, 3) describe the impact on students, 4) describe the impact on faculty, 5) detail the budget and resource changes, and 6) give a time line for the change. This, minus details, already exists and a new version will be submitted to Policy within the week, be considered by Policy at their next meeting, and be considered by the full Senate at the April meeting.

We briefly discussed the draft Retention Implementation Report. We noted that it said almost nothing about research. This is unfortunate as it is well known that undergraduates that participate in research have a graduation rate of 70% while those that do not have a rate of 35%, this from Joe Dunbar. Thus the chair will draft a note to Policy expressing our disappointment that there is no discussion of creating an Office of Undergraduate Research which would centralize all the opportunities for undergraduates to do research, many departments have programs and the Med School has limited contact with under-

graduates, and work to make undergraduates aware of such. Many did not have a chance to read the Report before the meeting. Thus a copy is attached for further comments from committee members.

Frida Glibin, Director of Inter-Institutional Research Initiatives, spoke to us about current efforts on research in the VPR's office. The statute revision on restricted research is going to be considered at the next Board of Governors meeting. She showed us a draft set of guidelines on authorship in interdisciplinary collaborations. Such is needed as different disciplines have very different common practices on authorship, and clashes can result. The draft guidelines are attached for comments from committee members.

Frida discussed a Post-doc to Faculty program that is being contemplated. The goal is to hire better faculty. The thought is to hire a post-doc/fellow for two, perhaps three, years, who at the end would be elevated to a tenure track position. There would not be many each year and Departments would have to make proposals that would be evaluated somehow. The program would be run by the VPR's office and the Provost. Somehow Dean's would have to have some input, and there would have to be some non-trivial way to get out of the tenure track guarantee.

The discussion was lively. Two years is perhaps too short, making it into a Post-doc/Fellowship program would make it attractive beyond the hard sciences where post-doc are rare, and this seems like an ideal development opportunity to find someone with money to contribute to name this program after. The thought is to try this program with two or three post-docs/fellows and see how it works before trying to make it permanent. Funding is a difficult problem.

The OVPR would like to set up some sort of group that would be able to offer advice on what will be future directions for research. The idea is to get out ahead of trends rather than following them. Folks who are invited to funding agency review panels or planning committees are likely to have the best insight as to future research initiatives.

OVPR would also like to have better connections with people who direct public policy. They want to set up a committee that will work on this. Ideas included setting up legislative visits in Lansing and/or to Congressmen in their district offices by active researchers who would give thanks for support and inform about the research done at the University. Volunteers for this committee would be welcome.