

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

Present: Cinabro, Avrutsky, Cacace, Golebiowska, Mordukhovich, Mueller, Oupicky, Stemmler, Thomas, Wildman, Dunbar, Frazal

Absent With Notice: Benkert, Ferreira, Huttemann, Lanza, MacArthur, Saydain, Tisdale, Kessel

Meeting time is 14:00 Thursday in 1270 FAB. Dates for the Fall semester are 20 October and 1 December. We will find a new meeting time for the Winter semester seeking to accommodate those with teaching or other meetings they cannot avoid this semester.

We discussed plans for committee activities for the year. The chair noted that there was only so much Senate committees can do, and we have to limit our activities or we risk not doing much of anything. The original list of suggestions came from a conversation Cinabro and Senate President Romano had about possibilities for this committee.

First a review of "Research Spending" with the figure of \$30M/year being mentioned. The basic goal is to widen the pool of Senate members who can say something useful about the University's budget. The events of last spring, when a blue ribbon faculty panel solicited for budgetary advice, was stymied by lack of knowledge. Our committee does get a copy of the report that the VP for Research submits to the Board of Governors, but this has only very high level budgetary information and is focused on external grants. We would really like to review something more detailed and more focused on the University's internal spending on Research. Ivan volunteered to pursue this. He has already sent a letter to VP Ratner who has responded that she is putting together the data for the committee.

Second a review on research misconduct policy. This is a difficult problem. The University's policy closely follows the requirements from external funding agencies such as the NIH. It is not possible to deviate from them no matter how onerous they are. We are also not able to discuss specific cases. Usually problems develop when proper procedures are not followed and the investigation breaks out into the open. Joe noted that most of the cases are solved internally and he thought that most of them were caused by personal friction. The chair suggested that we invite Phil Cunningham, newly appointed AVP for Research Compliance to come speak with the committee. The chair spoke privately with Phil and suggested that it would be most valuable to present statistics, how many cases, how they were resolved, etc. on misconduct to us. Since Phil has just started his new job, we will probably do this in the Winter semester.

Internal communication about research. While we are doing a much better job about communicating to the world Wayne State research results we still are quite ignorant about what is going on in departments beyond our own, and there is a wide gulf between

the medical school and main campus. There are some programs, Nano@Wayne for example, that do bridge these gaps, but this is rather specific. For example there is no easy way to find all the science talks given each week at the University without sifting through a great deal of noise. Perhaps we can have Julie O'Conner visit the committee to talk about these issues.

At the moment the VP for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School are the same person. This is how this was organized some time ago before the positions were split. How do we really want to organize the graduate school? The present organization presumes that all/most graduate students are researchers. This is not true. The Chair noted that the institutions that we aspire to be have strong, independent graduate school deans. Perhaps we can have a discussion on this with Provost Brown and VP/Dean Ratner? The committee thought this was a good idea.

We recounted the unhappy fate of the Research Incentive program. Joe chaired a committee that wrote a report that was turned in just before the previous President resigned in the summer of 2010. The current Provost thought the approach too "top down", and charged the Deans to come up with tailored research incentives within their own colleges. Little happened in the last year despite agitation by this committee. The committee chair thought the best way to revisit this is to ask the Provost about what had happened to the Research Incentive program. It may be impossible to revive this in the face of the budgetary squeeze, as just about any incentive program is going to cost some money.

While the research dashboard is a great tool for monitoring external grants, there is not a similar tool/extension for the monitoring of internal awards such as start-up funds. In the past we have been told that this was not going to happen due to opposition by accounting. There is new leadership now, and perhaps we can talk with Jim Barbret, former head of SPA and now AVP for Fiscal Operations and Controller about changing this.

Finally we talked about headaches with grant management. First the chair and others noted the arcane procedures that are required to certify the effort for graduate students, and then some horror stories were told about end of grant procedures. The committee should meet with Gail Ryan, head of SPA, to discuss these things.

This seems like a full plate of things to do for the year.