

Wayne State University
Academic Senate
Minutes of Research Committee Meeting
September 30, 2010

Present: Cinabro, Avrutsky, Benkert, Biswas, Ferreira, Lanza, Thomas, Tse, Dunbar, MacArthur, Wang, Whittum-Hudson, Wildman, Wurm

We decide on meeting dates for the rest of the Fall Semester. The meetings will be Thursdays 11:30-13:00 in FAB 1270 on 21 October and 18 November. We will find a new time in the Winter Semester.

We began talking about things that Joe Dunbar could comment on as he had to leave at 12:00. The Research Incentive report was completed and submitted to President Noren. He resigned a few days later. New Provost Brown reviewed the report and did not like it as he thought it was not a good idea to provide one incentive program across the whole campus even though there was a great deal of flexibility in the incentive rewards. He prefers College specific programs and has asked the Deans to come up with something. The Committee chair will follow up with the Provost and see where this is going and on what time scale.

Joe has looked at the Animal Research Protocol Review program. While there is not a mandate for this sort of internal review program from the NIH, there are strong signals that there will be a mandate in the near future. The reviews are conducted randomly, and are aimed at fixing problems rather than shutting down activity. The most frequent problem is that protocols are not up dated when personnel change. The committee chair got one complaint, but neither Joe nor anyone else on the committee have heard any complaints although clearly no one is happy about being reviewed. We will let this lie unless more complaints come our way.

We then discussed a charge from the Policy Committee to do something about a dissemination of research case in Nutrition and Food Science. Basically a student published a Masters Thesis as a book. The book does not properly identify the work as a copy of a Thesis and omits the acknowledgment which properly attributes the work as being in the Mentor's lab and part of a large body of work done mainly as a Doctoral Thesis by another student. When the department sought help they were told by the Research Compliance Officer and the General Counsel that this did not represent research misconduct or any sort of plagiarism. In general the committee is confused. This seems like a clear case of plagiarism, and in fact closely matches an example of research misconduct as given in the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course.

We do note that Theses are by default publicly available electronically, and thus Mentors should take care what appears in them if they are concerned about subsequently publishing the work as students automatically own the copyright of their Thesis and thus can reprint them. We all agree that a student should get permission from their mentor if they are going to reprint their thesis, but are not required to do so. This specific case is even worse as the publisher requires students to get the permission of their adviser to re-publish a thesis, but it was not given in this case as the student, even though she was still working in the department, claimed that she could not get in

touch with the adviser for a period of three months. Again it surprises the committee that the department cannot get help from the General Counsel on this matter.

It is not clear what we should do. We would like to hear from the General Counsel, specifically Laura Johnston, and the Research Compliance Officer, Dorothy Nelson, as to why there is no Research Misconduct or plagiarism in this case. The committee chair will try to get them to come to our next meeting. As to action we discussed requiring graduate students to undergo some sort of training, perhaps even a required course, on research ethics or minimally inserting some language on research misconduct into the graduate student hand book on the ethical distribution of data, with a specific admonishment to seek the permission of the adviser before reprinting a thesis. Ivan pointed out that students are getting approached by publishers with offers to reprint their theses. This is unlikely to be the last case of this if we do not educate both the students and the faculty.

The Committee chair reported that there is an effort underway to revise the University statute that forbids research if there is a restriction on the right to freely publish results except for a 90 day review period. Cases are arriving with such restrictions. Typically there is some aspect of the research that the grantee does not wish disclosed. The case that started this was a Department of Defense (DoD) funded study on shock trauma. The DoD has a model of the damage caused by shock trauma that it considers secret and will not allow details of this model to be published. The PI does not feel that this will significantly limit her ability to publish her work, and requested a waiver of the policy. This was granted, but it was time consuming and had to be approved by the Board of Governors. The revision will require a PI to request a waiver from the VP for Research to conduct restricted research explaining how the restriction is not fatal for the University's academic mission. The VP is required to quickly review the request, vetting with Export Control Office, etc. Those working on the project, technicians, post-docs, and students will be required to sign off that they are working on a project with publication restrictions. The VP will then either allow or deny the request. A committee chaired by AVP Gloria Heppner has drafted a revised statute. The committee had about ten members including faculty and representatives from the General Counsel and Export Control Office. The statute has been presented to the President's cabinet and will go to the Deans and the Academic Senate for review. Our committee should see it in the near future.

The committee chair noted that the OVPR suggested that they meet regularly to communicate problems more efficiently. Apparently this had been done in the past, but not recently. The committee thought this was a good idea, and the chair will pursue it.

The committee chair attended a meeting of the Policy Committee where the new University Graduate Research Fellowship program was discussed with Graduate School Dean Wardell. Graduate recruiting chairs or advisers from Math, Physics, and Psychology were in attendance, and Chemistry's experience was forcefully represented by Lou Romano, who is on the Policy Committee. A great deal of unhappiness was expressed with the program. It was labor intensive, departments were unhappy that decisions about their programs were being made by a University committee, and preferring the old system where departments were given a number of fellowships or housing allowances that they could use as they saw fit. Some used this as a recruiting tool while others supported established students. Dean Wardell acknowledged the klunkiness of the

program promising to make some changes, but defended the outcome as students who were offered UGRF's and did not take them accepted offers at programs of similar or better quality.

50% of the offers made were accepted leading to some very high quality students joining Wayne State. The Provost decided that the program should be revised moving back towards the old model, perhaps leading to some sort of hybrid model. We are likely to hear about this again.

Finally we had a brief discussion about what to do this year. The chair pointed out that having a directed thing to do was valuable as it kept the committee from drifting aimlessly. We discussed research communication, with a focus on internal communication: how do we improve connections among our colleagues beyond our own departments.

Facilities, specifically maintenance and construction of new, and their impact on research. The chair suggested that a recent report from the OVPR on this did an excellent job highlighting the problems, it should be widely available soon, and that perhaps we could reinforce it with a catalog of horror stories. We did not come to conclusion, and will come back to the subject next meeting.

As we broke up, the chair asked everyone to read the draft of How The University Supports Research, send him comments and suggestions, and for someone in the medical school to supply a concrete example of a problem with a research core that hampers our research efforts to parallel the one he described with the Instrument Shop on the main campus.