SENATE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FUNDING SUBCOMMITTE MEETING
September 18, 2019
12:00-1:00, FAB 3339

MINUTES

Chair: Brad Roth
Present: Poonam Arya, Christine Chow, Kristina Curtiss, Patricia McCormick, Krysta Ryzewski, Jennifer Wareham, Mazen Zamzam
Absent with notice: Donna Kashian, Meghan Courtney
Minutes: Krysta Ryzewski

I.   Introductions

II.   Chair's summary of developments leading to this point

Senior Associate Provost for Student Success M. Brockmeyer announced proposed changes to UROP on 1/17/19 (see meeting handouts).

Brockmeyer's proposal suggested a merged partnership between UROP and the McNair Scholars Program. Proposal presented to Academic Senate in winter and Brockmeyer attended follow-up meeting with Academic Senate Policy Committee during which committee members raised concerns and asked questions about her rationale behind the merger and its costs and benefits for student success (see Academic Senate Policy Committee minutes for May 6, 2019)

Associate Provost's concerns:
>   Achieving greater outcomes re: student success
>
>   Making research funding available to underserved / underrepresented students
>
>   Increasing graduation rate for underrepresented students

Academic Senate issues with Associate Provost's proposal:
>   Faculty and Academic Senate not consulted about proposed changes prior to Brockmeyer's announcement in 1/17/19 email
>
>   McNair is intended for students who intend to pursue PhDs; UROP more broadly focused on affording research opportunities to students with diverse career pathways
>
>   Definition of what counts as "underrepresented" students

III.   Discussion of UROP / McNair Scope

>   McCormick: Question about why it is not possible to continue both McNair and UROP funding? Discussion about funding issues and application process.
>
>   Scope of UROP and other undergraduate research funding?
>
>   Success rate of UROP applications?

How many applications to McNair, and from which programs?

What are the outcomes of McNair Scholars post-graduation?

> Chow: On the McNair website, no evidence that students go on to PhD programs. Are there data we might consult?

> What is the distribution of majors among students who hold McNair scholarships? Are particular fields not well-represented?

> Chow: She mentors many first generation and underrepresented students; none are McNair scholars (were they aware of the program?)

IV.   Discussion on running of UROP on administrative level

Zamzam: Shared his experience as a UROP recipient; noted lack of post-award reminders to submit report on activities undertaken during grant period

Chow: students learn about self-discipline and accountability during process

Roth: Observations about loosely-run UROP oversight after grants are awarded

V.   Discussion on types of UROP Projects across various disciplines

Chow: students are doing cutting-edge experimental research in the life sciences

Ryzewski: students participate in portions of faculty research in archaeology, from data prep and analysis to fieldwork.

VI.   Report from Kristina Curtiss on "UROP Re-Imagined Team Meeting", 9/17/2019

There is a new advisory committee established to re-evaluate and potentially redesign UROP, called "UROP Re-Imagined Team". The team includes 13 committee members and is chaired by Matt Orr (see list of members at end of these minutes); M. Brockmeyer led majority of 9/17 meeting. Kristina Curtiss is the Student Senate representative on the Team; she is the only student included in committee's conversations.

There are no representatives on the UROP Re-Imagined Team from School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy, or School of Education. No social scientists either.

During the 9/17 meeting, the UROP Re-Imagined Team identified 20 Key Stakeholders who might help revise UROP. These stakeholders may be enlisted to help alleviate various issues with funding, access, interdisciplinary research, and logistics. The identified Key Stakeholders include the Office of Financial Aid, digital humanities group, housing, OVPR, Medical School, Graduate School, federal government, STEAM program, Career Services, Urban Studies Dept, OTL, among others (*Academic Senate and social sciences are not included in stakeholder list*).

Brockmeyer instructed committee to generate takeaway points about UROP's objectives:
> Priorities: Student success: foremost priority

Need faculty training in research and teaching

Provost's office desires students working on multi-disciplinary research teams; faculty should take lead in arranging groups and recruiting students

Need broader vision of research to include students from all background

Brockmeyer's question / charge to the UROP Re-Imagined Team committee: "How might we work together to maximize potential in student research program?"

McCormick/ Curtiss / Chow: This question, as posed, is difficult to answer. First we need to agree upon what we mean by markers and language of student success. What is the metric we're using to justify the continuation and effectiveness of UROP? Also, how do we define research in the first place?

VII. Discussion on Operations and Logistics of UROP

Wareham / McCormick: Misperception that UROP is for Honors students; many undergraduate students are unfamiliar with the program due to lack of publicity and clarity on website; deadlines for submissions announced with short notice;

Comments about timing and visibility of UROP deadlines and preparedness of students to submit so early in the semester. Wareham: proposes series of workshops and sample applications available to prospective applicants earlier in the year / semester. Arya: Students could meet with faculty at end of winter semester and work on proposal over the summer.

There is no clear timeline about the UROP process on the website, or examples of successful proposals, or mentoring resources for the proposal writing.

Arya: Perhaps we need to revise the timeline of the UROP application process. Proposal - rolling out a UROP application process that begins in winter semester for a fall submission; or Wareham: year-round workshops on research proposal writing

Chow: Chemistry builds UROP proposal writing into their curriculum; suggests that other departments/programs consider including proposal writing methods in their curriculum

General – UROP does not define what "research" is and the diversity of approaches that qualify as research across various disciplines

Major issue – Disorganization of UROP process, from marketing to execution and post-grant reporting.

Brockmeyer has expressed that she is not in favor of continuing the structure that allows for multiple UROP application cycles per year

Wareham: UROP is an opportunity to strengthen Wayne State's research profile; could advertise UROP student accomplishments during recruitment efforts, orientation. Could enlist UROP as a mechanism for retention.

Chow: UROP website connects students with faculty researchers. She received 50 inquiries in one week after posting her profile on UROP's website; she cannot serve all the students who want to conduct research. Research opportunities are in high demand among undergraduates

Arya: UROP serves and is essential to fulfilling Wayne State's university mission

VIII.   Next Steps

Curtiss: UROP Re-Imagined Team plans to meet once a month until; Next meeting is October 3

Curtiss: According to Brockmeyer, feedback from Academic Senate will be part of the "program implementation" stage; not part of the UROP program's redesign.

Roth: In future, need to address issues between UROP and Financial Aid (federal compliance)

Roth: Will attempt to book Brockmeyer for meeting with the Senate Sub-committee

UROP Re-Imagined Team
Chair: Matthew Orr

Monica Brockmeyer, Senior Associate Provost for Student Success

Denise Figlewicz, Assistant Vice President, Research

Claudio Verani, Associate Dean, CLAS

Darryl Gardner, Director, Operational Effectiveness Student Success

Bianca Suarez, Manager, McNair Scholar's Program

Matt Orr, Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Research

Kristina Curtiss, Student Senate Rep

Lisa Maruca, Assoc. Prof. and Internship Coordinator, English

Jeremy Rickli, Assoc. Prof. Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering

Eranda Nikolla, Assoc. Prof., Chemical Engineering and Materials Science

Jon Anderson, Assoc. Prof., Music

Aaron Rury, Assistant Prof., Chemistry

Chris Kelly, Assoc. Prof., Physics and Astronomy

This list of team members was circulated at 9/17/19 meeting of the UROP Re-Imagined Team