

Research Policies Committee

Minutes of October 15, 2020

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Approved: December 10, 2020

Present: Colabianchi (chair), Dalaly, Harris, Rosales, St. Charles, Vornhagen, Ploutz-Snyder, Hinkovska-Galcheva, Liu, Sommers, Paxson

Absent: Malik, Popov

Guest: Vice President for Research, Rebecca Cunningham

11:02 Chair Colabianchi called the meeting to order.

The agenda was approved as presented.

11:05 Minutes from April 24, 2020 and from October 7, 2020 were approved.

11:06 Professor Allen Liu, SACUA liaison gave an overview of faculty governance to the group. He described the three faculty governance bodies, and gave an overview of Senate Assembly committees.

Chair Colabianchi requested information about the constituents of the Research Policies Committee. Professor Liu described the membership of the Faculty Senate and Senate Assembly. He offered to obtain more information from the Faculty Senate Office. Chair Colabianchi recognized the value that graduate students and postdocs bring to the committee.

The terms of committee chairs and committee members were discussed. Chair Colabianchi acknowledged the work of the previous chair, Professor Francine Dolins.

11:14 Committee Charges

Chair Colabianchi shared the committee charges with the committee. She explained that modifications to the charge can be requested. Chair Colabianchi indicated that some of the charges are new, and some are similar to last year's charges. Chair Colabianchi solicited input from the committee about the charges.

A committee member recognized that there are seven meetings and five charges. Chair Colabianchi asked for feedback from existing members about the role of charges in previous meetings. It was acknowledged that the charges have not played a prominent role in previous years.

Dr. Cunningham indicated that UMOR is very interested in DEI. They have a committee looking at disparities and inequities in research, particularly as exacerbated by COVID. Dr. Cunningham suggested that RPC look at this committee's recommendations, and provide feedback. Chair Colabianchi confirmed that this would be a meaningful partnership.

Chair Colabianchi will confirm with the Faculty Senate Office whether the 5th charge can be modified to reflect interaction with this UMOR committee rather than focus on community-based research.

The language of the 5th charge may be changed as follows: provide and make recommendations to address disparities and equities in research, and particularly as exacerbated by COVID.

Professor Liu stated that he would gather more information about the origins of the charges.

A discussion about the committee's charges ensued. It was suggested that charges be reduced to include items that can be addressed this year. The charges as written are broad. More specific action items will be helpful.

New research analytics unit – Dr. Cunningham suggested looking at some reports on research expenditures and bringing those to the committee to review. Dr. Cunningham noted that some areas do not report through the research infrastructure, such as procurement and the library. Dr. Cunningham also noted that the name of the committee as Research Policies Committee is not consistent with the charges. A focus on research policies may focus more on compliance issues.

A suggestion was made to review minutes to see if there are specific issues for follow up.

There is general agreement to remove the 4th charge. Research infrastructure units can be contacted when specific needs arise.

The first charge will continue as written. For charge number 3, VP Cunningham suggested that Jason Owen Smith come in and give some background on how funds are being spent, and how this compares to last year. Charge 4 will be removed.

There was a discussion about what issues or items can be brought to the administration. Dr. Cunningham indicated that it is helpful to receive feedback about issues that they are not aware of.

Chair Colabianchi talked about setting up a Google doc to share ideas and to continue working on charges. She will also reach out to Jason Owen Smith to schedule a visit.

Dr. Cunningham mentioned that she has a report on inequities in research exacerbated by COVID that can be reviewed by the committee. It was suggested that this report be considered at the next meeting on November 19. Dr. Cunningham said that someone from the team may be available since she is not available for the next meeting

Chair Colabianchi stated that it may be helpful for committee members to read the [ADVANCE report](#) that came out recently.

11:44 Research Challenges and Successes

Nick sent out a list and shared thoughts from people he is working with.

Communications moved from bi-monthly to monthly. There was a question about whether this is helpful.

A future topic could relate to availability of grants in the future as internal funding has decreased.

Dr. Cunningham indicated that this is challenging, however, some internal funding is becoming more available again. There is a question about whether people know that research discretionary accounts will be more available. Dr. Cunningham would like help with communication efforts about the availability of internal research accounts.

The committee discussed having representation from the Dearborn and Flint campuses.

Chair Colabianchi will share input received from Nick Harris with the group.

A question was asked about the status of research cores on campus. They are currently at about 65% capacity. Proposal submissions are where they are expected to be, and federal funding spending is only down about 5% or 6% from what is expected. Internal research funding is down 25% to 30%. Funds have been largely used for salaries and personnel.

Dr. Rosales agreed that the portion about "community-based research" should be struck. She also suggested revising item 5 and adopting language to include a DEI-informed approach. Something like, - Examine DEI-informed procedures and practices related to research. She noted a change to the charge statement along these lines makes attention to disparities implicit as part of DEI-informed research policies and practices, regardless of topic or focus area. She also noted this year (2020-21) is the final of the five year campus-wide diversity, equity and inclusion effort at the University. She also noted the President has charged the DEI effort to continue beyond 2020-21, with the University performing a year of retrospective evaluation of the DEI efforts during 2021-22, and then beginning DEI 2.0 in the fall of 2022.

11:29: Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: November 13, 2020 11:30