



Research Policies Committee

Minutes of December 10, 2020

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Present: Natalie Colabianchi, Robert Ploutz-Synder, MaryJo Banasik, Maddy Paxson, Irene St Charles, Vania Hinkovska-Galcheva, Allen Liu, Marisa Conte, Zenon Sommers, Vania Hinkovska-Galcheva, Teri Rosales

Absent: Mimi Dalaly, Vitaliy Popov, Nicholas Harris, Jay Vornhagen, Hafiz Malik

Guest: Jason Owen-Smith

11:02 Chair Colabianchi called the meeting to order.

The revised minutes for October 15, 2020 adding Maddy Paxson as present were approved.

The minutes for November 13, 2020 were approved.

11:05 Chair Colabianchi introduced guest Jason Owen-Smith. Owen-Smith studies large complex networks that affect knowledge of innovation. He published a book called *Research Universities and the Public Good*.

11:06 Jason Owen-Smith Presentation and Discussion

Owen-Smith gave a presentation to the group, "Using Data to Understand Research Inequities"

This is a new endeavor and he wishes to get some feedback from the committee. Owen-Smith seeks to do justice to the wide range of research from the arts to bioinformatics. He studies how research works and how it has an effect on knowledge and on the world.

Owen-Smith joined UMOR in January 2020. His charge was to design and build a unit that would focus on using data to which the university already has to access to generate information, not dashboards, but knowledge about what works and what does not. Academic leaders make decisions, but there isn't systematic data to aid with decision making.

The unit is ½ of Owen-Smith's time. After COVID he pivoted from broad infrastructure to the following questions:

1. Understanding COVID-19's effects on the UM research enterprise
2. Systematic inequities pertaining to the research missions
3. How COVID-19 effects may exacerbate existing, or create new research inequities

Owen-Smith posed the questions:



If the goal is to support the most excellent research possible, how can we understand excellence before everything has been finalized?

Given your field and location, what kinds of things make you look at a research project or student or colleague and think that there is great potential?

Owen-Smith stated that women are experiencing more labor during COVID, which is exacerbated by the move to online learning. The pandemic is hitting communities of color harder. Women and minority scholars already face challenges which were not created by COVID but which are exacerbated.

Relevant Recent Research

Owen-Smith stated that new research is coming out from a wide range of people that gives a sense of what the pandemic is doing to academe. Faculty work hours are declining, there have been impacts on whether women will be first author on papers. There are currently comments and snippets of data. Some think the pandemic could set academe back 30 years.

Research Analytics & COVID 19

Owen-Smith has looked at the data warehouse. He is looking at HR data and spending.

He is also looking at new proposals being submitted. A question is whether male and female investigators are submitting proposals at different rates. There are existing disparities, but they don't appear to be worsened by COVID. Some significant differences are the kinds of research spending people rely on. Freezing all spending may have uneven effects depending on how research is funded.

Empirical Context – new research

Owen-Smith has a sense of the full range of research faculty on campus. He looked at all job titles that are eligible to be a Principal Investigator on an external grant. This includes the clinical track, research track, and instructional track, which does not include LEO. Some librarians, archivists and high level staff are included. Postdocs and graduate students are not included in this data.

Owen-Smith has also looked at what faculty spend that is tagged as a research project in the general ledger. He looked across rank and track and 3 categories of spending including sponsored federal, sponsored nonfederal, and institutional spending.

Tenure track are likely to have largest amount of institutional funding.
Early career are more dependent on institutional funding.
Associate level faculty have the least access to institutional funds.
The job you're in and career stage, and type of research you do are relevant.

4.5% of PI eligible faculty are black, 39% are women, 4% are latinx, .03% native American

Black faculty are more concentrated in early career ranks, and are more largely represented in the clinical track. Faculty of color are concentrated in small areas – 1/3 in LSA and they are in units that have less funding available.



The data include Michigan Medicine but not the health system.

Member Rosales inquired about whether the data looks at primary appointments only. Owen-Smith stated that the primary instructional appointment is considered for tenure track faculty, and for clinical and research track faculty it's the unit that administers their grants.

Owen-Smith expressed plans to follow up with Member Rosales to share DEI data.

Having looked at research spending profiles, how does research spending carry across the university by race, ethnicity, and gender? Women are more reliant on institutional funds.

Latinx faculty seem to depend more on institutional research funding. Black faculty have the least dependence on (or least access to institutional research funds) They rely often on nonfederal research funds. This may be due to fields that rely more on foundation funding.

How is the university responding to COVID? Owen-Smith provided a snapshot of total spending by the institution. This compares one month this year with the same month last year. Patterns are different depending on the source of funding. Institutional funding is down substantially more than federal funding. It is expected that reduced institutional spending will have effects longer term. This can impact faculty that rely on internal funding more.

Policies that do not allow reduced indirect cost recovery from nonfederal sources is more likely to negatively impact black and latinx faculty.

Federal spending was never frozen, but administratively people thought it was.

Short term and long term recommendations were made in UMOR – some are currently being implemented. They have been talking with research associate deans

11:34 Q&A

A question was posed to Owen-Smith: It was asked given his background and research, whether he has any thoughts and insights as to whether an automatic extension of a promotion/tenure clock for junior faculty would actually help with equity issues due to COVID, or if an automatic approval to extension request would be a better approach.

Owen-Smith responded that he doesn't personally know of anything that has looked at this specific question. He indicated that he believes that it is usually better to have policies opt out rather than opting in. This is a general finding. He does not have a comprehensive sense of this.

Owen-Smith noted that the data is not designed for research. He has looked at the patterns of research spending by unit and funders, and based on what the funds are used for, so they can see funds used for salary versus research costs, and indirect costs and other kinds of charges. There are a lot of differences across units. This could be because of concentration in the field. Some units will experience bigger impacts than others.



Owen-Smith noted that work is promising, and that if you can develop data systems that will allow you to more easily evaluate new programs, then this capacity will help to explain what is really going on. He stated that they won't know what the effects of COVID are for the foreseeable future. But they are building information gathering into policy changes.

Member Ploutz-Snyder asked how data related to potential inequities related to grant proposals getting submitted by race and gender due to the imbalance in childcare are being collected.

Owen-Smith indicated that there are 3 leading indicators, including new proposal submission, new IRB submission, which are required for funded and not funded projects, and spending.

New proposals are tracked in the data warehouse. They can look at where different groups are submitting proposals and how much they are submitting for.

Owen-Smith noted that proposal submissions are holding constant or are slightly above, but the average proposal is smaller. Female faculty are still submitting and getting NIH grants, but they are more likely to get them alone or with other women.

Chair Colabianchi asked about the impact on operations and opportunities, expenditures, and inequities.

Owen-Smith stated that spending on salaries from federal sources has remained slightly higher or constant. Salaries are continuing to be paid under OMB guidance. There could be a impacts when salary has been spent but progress has not been made. Purchases of other direct costs have gone down.

Chair Colabianchi asked about the impact of COVID on research priorities and whether information is available on this subject matter or on the type of research that is being done.

Owen-Smith indicated that this information is not systemically in the system. He is working toward using text analyses methods across all successful federal grants for which they can obtain abstracts to do an assessment. He noted that you can look at the department level, and at divisions within funding agencies. You can look at NSF Directorate and NIH study sections, but this hasn't been done yet.

Member Rosales asked what information is available about institutional research funds, and the ones that were funded, and those that were not.

Owen-Smith stated that he uses multi-method research using different kinds of data. He does not currently have this capacity.

Owen-Smith noted that he can't work with qualitative data at this point. The current data show what people do, but not what they think or feel. Multiple data sources are needed, but this hasn't been done yet.

Chair Colabianchi thanked Owen-Smith for joining the meeting. Owen-Smith noted that some of the work the committee is doing is already a priority for him. He is happy to continue the discussion.



11:53 Jason Owen-Smith left the meeting; Finalize charges

Chair Colabianchi shared the charges.

Chair reviewed charges 1-3.

Charge 4 (now 3) was updated as follows:

Charge 4. Support the development and implementation of recommendations for DEI-informed policies and practices in research in partnership with other organization on campus to address disparities, particularly as exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Charges 3 and 4 were re-ordered. Parentheses were removed from charge 3 (now 4).

The votes were tallied for the change in the name of the committee.

Research Policy Committee - 1

Research Practices Committee - 6

Research Operations Committee - 1

Research Policy and Practices Committee - 1

Research Practices Committee was approved as the committee's revised name.

Chair Colabianchi will be meeting with SACUA on January 11, 2021 to finalize the revisions to the charges and title.

12:02 The meeting was adjourned.