

To: Colleen Conway, Immediate Past Chair, SACUA

From: Natalie Colabianchi, Chair, Research Policy Committee/Research Advisory Committee

Subject: Report on Activities of the Research Advisory Committee for 2020/2021

Members: Marisa Conte, Mimi Dalaly, Nicholas Harris, Vania Hinkovska-Galcheva, Hafiz Malik, Maddy Paxson, Robert Ploutz-Synder, Vitaliy Popov, Teri Rosales, Zenon Sommers, Irene St Charles, Jay Vornhagen

SACUA Liaison: Allen Liu

Meeting Dates: 10/07/2020; 10/15/2020; 11/13/2020; 12/10/2020; 01/21/2021; 02/19/2021; 03/19/2021; 04/29/2021

Summary:

We had the opportunity to speak with and provide feedback to multiple members of the University of Michigan Office of Research (UMOR) on multiple occasions including Dr. Rebecca Cunningham (Vice President for Research), Jessica Durkin (Chief of Staff at UMOR), Dr. Jason Owen-Smith (Executive Director of the Research Analysis and Data Integration Office), and Dr. Tabbye Chavous (Associate Vice President for Research – Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts). We had four charges this year: 1) Provide input on continuing plans for research operations in the COVID-19 environment; 2) Examine the impact of reduced research operations and reduced research opportunities on research practices and outcomes (e.g., research priorities, research expenditures, indirect cost recovery, inequities in research); 3) Support the development and implementation of recommendations for DEI-informed policies and practices in research in partnership with other organizations on our campuses to address disparities, particularly as exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and 4) To engage with internal university structures (e.g., Library, IACUC, IRBs) that support research across all three campuses to address challenges as needed and as time allows. A summary of our activities on each of these charges is given below.

Summary Topic 1: Provide input on continuing plans for research operations in the COVID-19 environment

We met with Dr. Cunningham and Jessica Durkin on several occasions throughout the year. During these occasions, Dr. Cunningham provided an overview of research ramp-up plans and she solicited feedback from our group on new developments and emerging issues. Furthermore, the committee sought clarity on some specific issues from Dr. Cunningham. Action items were generated that would address some of the reported research issues and these action items were completed (e.g., contact the human subjects review committee to

make sure applications are revisited for studies that were previously on hold, look into the MiChart access issue for students, confirm a postdoctoral representative on the committee led by Dr. Chavous and Dr. Huda Akil).

Summary Topic 2: Examine the impact of reduced research operations and reduced research opportunities on research practices and outcomes (e.g., research priorities, research expenditures, indirect cost recovery, inequities in research)

We met with Dr. Owen-Smith who gave a presentation titled “Using Data to Understand Research Inequities”. Dr. Owen-Smith shared results from analyses of U-M institutional data to highlight the impact of COVID-19 on total R&D spending and research spending profiles by gender, race/ethnicity, and rank. Research spending had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels and institutional spending declined substantially more than spending of federal funds. Salaries from federal sources remained constant or increased slightly, but purchases/other direct costs had gone down. Overall, there were differences in dependence on institutional research spending by faculty gender, race/ethnicity, and rank. The committee provided feedback and gave suggestions for additional analytic issues to examine.

Summary Topic 3: Discuss ways to support the development and implementation of recommendations for DEI-informed policies and practices in research in partnership with other organizations on our campuses to address disparities, particularly as exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic

We explored contextual factors related to research inequities, in particular those made worse by COVID-19, through reviewing and discussing a report from the ADVANCE Program and inviting Drs. Chavous and Akil to give an update on their committee’s work to address inequities induced or exacerbated by COVID-19. Drs. Chavous and Akil shared a broad overview of current categories of challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, including career disruptions for faculty researchers at all stages, family care needs (unmet and emergent), research continuity, research time recovery, need for internal communications, and types of personal impacts. These challenges, persistent pre-pandemic disparities, and research productivity are interrelated and, as such, addressing the challenges and disparities is imperative. Immediate action is needed, with three main recommendations: 1) enhance research continuity by lifting spending restrictions on research funds; 2) support research time recovery by considering short-term service releases and adjustment in teaching based on transparent equity principles; and 3) promote resources for family care that adapts existing resources. However, the need will be on-going, with essential coordination and leverage across effects.

In addition, Dr. Teri Rosales (Research Analyst for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) gave an overview of DEI efforts across the campus. We conducted an examination of action items across the 50 units in the 5th year of the U-M DEI effort (n=2,493), looking specifically at what proportion of action items pertained to research and the general themes of the research action items. We found that research specifically constituted a small proportion (~4%) of action items. Modal themes in rank order of frequency are as follows: Support/promotion of DEI-

related research, research for evaluation within units, research pipeline, enhanced communication and tracking of DEI-related research, and issues to support success of research among faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and staff. We believe in future years there is an opportunity for this committee to promote, in concert with other groups on our campuses, DEI-informed research/scholarship/creative practices on par with the Presidential Initiative for DEI-informed, Inclusive Teaching in U-M DEI 2.0 (2023 and beyond) among the 50 units, as applicable. DEI efforts in Research should address:

1. DEI in research: who is a part of research teams, how is research being funded, what are barriers to engaging in research, what are obstacles to advancement
2. DEI of research: who is included in research studies, are burdens of participation being addressed, how inclusive are our questions when we ask people to self-identify in our studies
3. DEI research: how we can increase our support, catalyze, and promote scholarship on DEI-related research issues

Summary Topic 4: To engage with internal university structures (e.g., Library, IACUC, IRBs) that support research across all three campuses to address challenges as needed and as time allows

We met with Public Engagement representatives (Drs. Elyse Aurbach, Public Engagement Lead, and Rachel Niemer, Director Outreach and Access, Center for Academic Innovation) to discuss their work and its intersection with our charges. They provided an overview of public engagement on campus, including its origins, the units involved, progress, and challenges. They shared a number of valuable resources including a database of public engagement resources, information on the Public Engagement Faculty Fellowship, a report from the *Conceptualizing Public Engagement Series*, and information on Wolverine Express from the Center for Educational Outreach for those interested in educational outreach.

Topics to be continued or carried forward to next year are:

Topic 1: Consider COVID-19's long term effects on the research pipeline and loss/reduction of training and talent

Topic 2: Facilitate a greater proportion of action items pertaining to research activities in the U-M DEI plans in DEI 2.0

Topic 3: Engage with internal university structures that support research across all three campuses to address challenges