The meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m.

1. **Consideration of minutes from October 11, 2008 RPC Meeting**
   There were no comments or suggestions regarding the minutes.
   **Motion:** William Ensminger motioned to approve the minutes as written.
   **Second:** Nils Walter seconded the motion.
   **Vote:** All in favor.

2. **Final Policy on the Research Track**
   **Guest:** Steve Ceccio

   Steve Ceccio updated the RPC on the key changes made to the Research Track Proposal:
   1. characterization of two distinct tracks – research scientist and research professor tracks
   2. explicit communication of factors that determine promotion in each track
   3. emphasis on scholarly work and independence for the Research Scientist Track

   Ceccio briefed the committee on the results obtained from the ISR survey, which demonstrated that job satisfaction of research faculty rapidly deteriorated after about three years. Promotion and career advancement was not effectively communicated to new faculty during the hiring process so many faculty members misleading believed that the Research Professor Track was a pathway to the Tenure Track. Survey results also showed that some deans would inhibit assistant research scientists from writing their own grants unless permission was obtained.
from their mentors. Such an occurrence caused these assistant research scientists to get stagnated in “lower ranks.”

Ceccio highlighted the major distinctions between the Research Scientist and Tenure Track. The Research Scientist Track encompasses the following ranks: Research Investigator, Assistant Research Scientist, Associate Research Scientist, and Research Scientist. Similarly the Research Professor Track encompasses the following ranks: Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor. To progress through both tracks, faculty members must exhibit increased independence and national scholarly reputation. These requirements are stressed more for the Research Scientist Track or Tenure Track. More, whereas the Research Scientist track does not have any teaching requirements, the Research Professor Track does. If, however, a member of the Research Professor Track does instruct a course, he must adopt a title of adjunct professor for that particular semester.

Chair Ensminger asked whether a research investigator is able to leave the institution if his mentor leaves. Ceccio replied that yes, a Research Investigator has added flexibility because he or she is able to move to another institution with his or her received grant.

Ceccio stated that faculty members will also be subjected to mandatory three and six year university-level reviews, effective September 1, 2009. A committee member asked whether faculty jointly appointed as a Research Professor in one school and a Research Scientist in another school at UM will be subject to two different reviews. An OVPR representative replied that in such instances, there will be a joint review by both schools.

For the Assistant Research Scientist, there are five possible outcomes from these reviews:

1. Promotion to Associate Research Scientist
2. Continuation as an Assistant Research Scientist because of notable progress in one’s research but too little progress to justify a promotion
3. Transfer (not promotion) to Research Professor Track
4. Movement to appropriate staff position if scientist is not creating a scholarly record; persons continue to receive same benefits as previous position
5. Termination if scholarly productivity is not demonstrate during six years

Chair Ensminger asked if there is a document that efficiently details what the concept ‘tenure’ means. Ceccio replied that new faculty members may be hired with 75% instructional and 25% research appointments. As a result, the so-called tenure clock does not start automatically. But if we value tenure as an academic ideal, then this concept must be defended.
Ceccio informed the RPC members of the progress in implementing the new changes to the Research Tracks. Later this month, a meeting will be held between Research Associate Deans, OVPR staff, and the Provost’s Office to review changes in criteria and the evaluation process. Also, offer letters and memorandum of understanding (MOUs) issued to new faculty members must be revised to ensure that all terms are clear. In March 2009, all schools and college units must submit modified offer letters and MOUs to the Provost and OVPR for additional review. Finally, as mentioned before, the changes in the Research Tracks shall become effective on September 1st, 2009.

4. Research Opportunities for Undergraduate Students
Nick Tan, MSA Undergraduate Student Rep

Nick Tan solicited the RPC for assistance to increase the awareness of undergraduate research opportunities on UM’s campus. According to Tan, few students, particularly in the social science fields, are cognizant of the plethora of research opportunities available to them at UM. Tan believes that many of his peers misleadingly assume that to partake in these research activities one must be an honor student. Tan proposed that this “myth” can be eradicated early in a student’s undergraduate career by communicating research opportunities via frequent email alerts. Faculty within LSA should also inform students of these endeavors during classroom lectures.

Nils Walter mentioned that the UROP program at UM serves to solicit ideas from faculty, but he is concerned by the amount of feedback generated by the social science faculty. The question remains: are research opportunities for social science undergraduates an issue of supply or demand? Are students simply unaware of the available opportunities or do they dislike the research ideas proposed by faculty? The UROP program is nationally recognized and is markedly beneficial to freshman and sophomores who may have difficulty selecting a major. In the Chemistry and Biochemistry department, students receive academic incentives to partake in research programs as early as during freshman year. Clearly, more effort or more incentives should be created to increase awareness of research in the social science disciplines. As a first step to solve this problem, Walter gave Tan the contact information of the person in charge of UROP’s social science division at UM. Also, Chair Ensminger empowered Tan to challenge leaders of UROP to increase the available research opportunities within the social sciences.

5. New business
There was no new business to be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.