

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
February 2, 2007

Present: Vimal Chaitanya, Prentice Baptiste, Janice Black, David Boje, Kip Coggins, Alexander Fernald, Abbas Ghassemi, Nirmala Khandan, William Stein, Steve Thomas, Elizabeth Titus, Allen Torell, David Voelz, Patricia Wojahn, Karl Wood

Absent: Wanda Borges, James Botsford, Shaun Cooper, Everett Egginton, Inigo Garcia-Bryce, Maria Luisa Gonzalez, Linda Lacey, Michele Nishiguchi, Marc Pruyne

1. Minutes from the meetings held on September 8, 2006 and November 3, 2006 were approved as presented.
2. State and Federal Initiatives

Vice President Vimal Chaitanya told members that there were two major initiatives currently being considered, one being the high-end supercomputing center for which the governor wants to provide \$30M to be located on the UNM campus but to also include campus centers throughout New Mexico. This initiative is being coordinated by Tom Bowles, the governor's science advisor. Dr. Chaitanya feels that Dr. Bowles is trying to get academia more involved in research with government labs and other entities. The supercomputing centers should be able to produce a very crisp kind of imaging capability that will hopefully excite students to go into science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines.

The other state initiative important to the university is \$10M from the governor in renewable energy. If approved, an RFP will go out to all entities in the state of New Mexico. Dr. Chaitanya believes NMSU has a good chance of getting a significant portion of that.

Dr. Chaitanya updated members on his recent trip to Washington, DC where he listened to the Under Secretary of Energy and the NSF Director. He said NSF is going to allocate more money than usual for major research equipment (MRE) and facilities development. For the United States to be competitive we need to have access to MRE and not just at the government labs but also at some universities. According to the Under Secretary of Energy, there will be renewed emphasis on wind, nuclear (including fusion), biofuel, and biomass fuel cells while hydrogen and solar seem to have inherent issues making them less suitable

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) funds high-risk proposals which if successful are highly rewarded. The Department of Energy wants to start a similar program through their department called the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E). If faculty have an energy related idea that hasn't been funded due to its unusual nature, ARPA-E should be targeted as a possible source of funding.

With regard to the Federal Initiatives, appropriations for FY08 will have safety checks to make sure money is being used appropriately with marketable results. The VPR office along with Ricardo Rel will start tracking all federally appropriated money that comes to NMSU. The major concerns seem to be with defense contractors. Programs for FY06 that were funded will probably see a continuation if it was requested. There will be no new funding for FY07. Dr. Chaitanya told the council that President Martin has mentioned that NMSU should not

depend on earmarks for funding. The Federal Initiative books have been printed and sent to NMSU lobbyist Lewis-Burke in preparation for President Martin and Dr. Chaitanya's visit on February 12th to meet with the congressional delegation.

3. Interdisciplinary Grant Process

Fifty proposals were submitted for the Interdisciplinary Research Grant (IRG) opportunity that the VPR office provided. Per Dr. Chaitanya, of the fifty proposals, forty-five were very good with about 5 not being interdisciplinary. A total of ten were funded at approximately \$50,000. The Graduate Research Enhancement Grants (GREG) were awarded at \$180,000 to ten individuals/faculty sponsors, and seventeen awards for the Undergraduate Research Interdisciplinary Grants (URIG) at \$40,000. Names of the awardees can be viewed at the following link: http://www.nmsu.edu/~ucomm/grant_recipients.htm.

Members requested that when review panels are selected for opportunities such as this that all colleges be included. The review panel for the IRG's did have 3 URC members on the panel, Chair Karl Wood, Incoming Chair Alexander "Sam" Fernald, and HSS member Wanda Borges. Dr. Chaitanya's hope is the funding will provide seed money that will, by the end of the calendar year, show some progress towards fundable research.

4. Award Committee

The announcement for URC Award for Exceptional Achievements in Creative Scholarly Activity will be sent out campus-wide in the near future with a deadline of March 9, 2007 for nominations to be in the VPR office. This year URC decided to increase the number of submissions allowed from previous years to include 2 individuals/teams for early career and 2 for distinguished career for the colleges, the library, PSL and other research centers. Arts and Sciences may nominate up to 3 for early career and 3 for distinguished career. Volunteers to serve on the Award Subcommittee include Nirmala Khandan, David Boje, Kip Coggins, Allen Torell, and Patricia Wojahn (includes representation from each college with the exception of Education).

5. Mission, Vision and Goals

This agenda request was made by Abbas Ghassemi. Chair Karl Wood suggested Dr. Ghassemi should chair this new subcommittee that would focus on the mission, vision and goals of the URC. Dr. Ghassemi consented to be the chair. Janice Black and Sam Fernald agreed to be members on this subcommittee. Elizabeth Titus told members that the role is definitely defined as the URC being an advisory group to the Vice President for Research. Dr. Chaitanya spoke about a comparable council at University of Central Florida and how it not only advised the Vice President, but served an important function as advisory to review research related issues.

6. Recent Reallocation of Faculty Slots/Research Ramifications

Concern over the loss of some faculty positions for some of the colleges was discussed. Since David Voelz requested this agenda item and then was unable to stay at the meeting, it was decided to revisit the topic at the next URC meeting.

7. Other

Dr. Ghassemi suggested the URC should become more involved with the Federal and State Initiatives hopefully to a level that they make suggestions to the Executive Vice President and President through the VPR office. Chair Karl Wood asked Dr. Ghassemi to include this in the new subcommittee for mission, vision and goals.

Dean Titus recommended the URC select a member to be a spokesperson on the Living the Vision committee as this would insure the research vision is included in this campus-wide effort. She also told members that in today's *Hotline* (February 2nd) the library will have a review on 2,800 subscriptions to journals. Every department will be asked to put a value on specific journals as budgets are limited. Everything that is currently active is on the list.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:31 p.m.
Minutes by Frances Schumacher