

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
May 4, 2007

Present: Vimal Chaitanya, Janice Black, Laurie Churchill, Kip Coggins, Everett Egginton, Alexander Fernald, Abbas Ghassemi, Nirmala Khandan, William Stein, Steve Thomas, Allen Torell, Patricia Wojahn, Karl Wood

Absent: Prentice Baptiste, David Boje, Wanda Borges, James Botsford, Shaun Cooper, Inigo Garcia-Bryce, Maria Luisa Gonzalez, Linda Lacey, Michele Nishiguchi, Marc Pruyn, David Voelz, Elizabeth Titus

1. Minutes from the meeting held on April 5, 2007 were approved as presented.
2. Draft Letter to Administration re: Reallocation of Faculty Slots

It was decided that the letter to administration regarding reallocation of faculty slots should be put on hold until a new provost is on board. Two separate draft versions will be kept on file until that time.

3. Subcommittees

- a) Awards – Nirmala Khandan told members that the award committee had selected Shuguang Deng, Desh Ranjan, Barbara Chamberlin, and William Eamon to receive the University Research Council award for creative scholarly activity to which Vice President Chaitanya concurred. A motion was made and passed to change the criteria to include self nominations. A suggestion to consider next year would be to increase the number of awards to include a third category for interdisciplinary or collaborative efforts.
- b) Mission, Vision and Goals – Abbas Ghassemi will provide a presentation during the fall semester and is collecting information from Elizabeth Titus and working with Vimal Chaitanya and Incoming Chair Sam Fernald.
- c) Election – Sam Fernald told members that Abbas Ghassemi had been selected as a candidate for Chair Elect for academic year 07-08 and asked if there were any other nominations from the council. None were forthcoming and Abbas Ghassemi was voted in as Chair Elect.

4. NMSU Undergraduate Research and Creative Arts Symposium

Karl Wood updated members on the Spring Undergraduate Research and Creative Arts Symposium and asked URC if the council should be involved with this symposium as it is in the fall semester with the AMP and URC fair (taking place on October 5, 2007). Vimal Chaitanya said that he wanted the supported students (GREG and URIG) to provide posters.

A motion was made and seconded for the URC to be involved in both the fair and the symposium. Laurie Churchill will look into what is required for URC involvement in the symposium.

6. EPSCoR

Laurie Churchill told URC that NMSU has a candidate who has applied for the NM State EPSCoR Director position that is open. A decision will be made in early June.

An EPSCoR proposal is being put together for the next round of funding. The RFP has not been issued but a group lead by Al Rango of NMSU has been at work for several months. The topic is on climate change and its effect on snowmelt, water availability and water quality in the Rio Grande basin. Dr. Rango is working with a core group from UNM, NM Tech, Native American tribes in the state and water agencies to name a few. A complete draft is expected by July 1st. This could bring in funding at \$3M per year for 3 years.

7. Other Business

Strategic Initiatives - Vimal Chaitanya asked URC to think about strategic initiatives especially in areas that NMSU should pursue. He said NMSU has missed opportunities in some areas including nano science and technology as there are only five or six faculty involved in nano on campus with Shuguang Deng, Shay Curran, and Sergei Smirnov being the among the top researchers. He felt that support from URC (with their being representatives of every college), support from the VPR office, and support from the deans is vital. Current proposals with nano in them have a better chance of funding.

Dr. Chaitanya said he felt we have also missed opportunities on bioengineering/bio-technology. He provided the definition from NSF for nano as micro-structure or materials, or technology that deals with dimensional 100 nanometers maximum. Dr. Chaitanya wants NMSU to make energy research a campus wide theme. He would like to see sociologists worry about how energy impacts the societal aspects of life. He would like to see psychologists get involved as well. If NMSU has a broad spectrum emphasis on one, two or three themes that will put us in position to get funding, he would like that kind of discussion to evolve from the URC. Emphasis and focus on what is the national critical technology/science, soft or hard, and how NMSU can get involved in that research to better position NMSU is critical.

A university-wide list of faculty member's areas of research/expertise was suggested as a way to tap into NMSU's interest areas. Dr. Chaitanya said the VPR office has created lists for DTRA, homeland security, water, energy but that the lists are not necessarily complete. He told members that the InfoEd system was useless with tracking but the new system the VPR office is purchasing will. A database has not been created and/or used in the past. He said eventually we will have it but it requires staff to compile.

Federal Initiatives – The review panel for the strategic initiatives will include a Lewis-Burke representative, Ricardo Rel, a URC representative – Sam Fernald, 3 research deans, a science advisor, Vimal Chaitanya and Wynn Egginton.

Thank you – To Karl Wood for chairing the URC for academic year 06-07.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:23 p.m.
Minutes by Frances Schumacher