

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
November 2, 2007

Present: Vimal Chaitanya, Brenda Benefit, David Boje, Sam Fernald, Abbas Ghassemi, Nirmala Khandan, Michele Nishiguchi, Meghan Starbuck, William Stein, Elizabeth Titus, Myriam Torres, April Ulery, David Voelz, Patricia Wojahn, Karl Wood, Michael Young

Absent: Prentice Baptiste, Kip Coggins, Shaun Cooper, Everett Egginton, Linda Lacey, Azadeh Osanloo, Steve Thomas

1. Minutes for October 1, 2007 were approved.
2. Research Presentation – Vimal Chaitanya

Vice President Vimal Chaitanya provided a research presentation at the URC meeting held on October 1, 2007 but due to the lack of time, the presentation was continued at this meeting.

Incentives for Interdisciplinary Research

- Give total \$ credit to all who participate in multi-investigator proposals
- Obtain the support of the Deans to consider the importance of interdisciplinary research in faculty performance evaluation
- Currently, in many Colleges, co-PIs do not get any credit. This must change immediately
- Seek joint appointments within NMSU departments and with LANL, AFRL, SNL, etc.

Reward for Research Productivity

- Select outstanding researchers through peer evaluation process for monetary awards every year
- Number of awards available for each college and research units can be predetermined based on a formula

Activate Clusters

- Clusters need to have a structure
- Cluster leaders should get a stipend for performing their roles
- Cluster leaders have to be the right choice. Their continuation should be performance-based
- Cluster leaders should report to VPR and be subjected to annual performance evaluation

Improve Visibility of Research in the Overall Mission of the University

- Streamline support services to provide responsive help to the researchers
- Involve VPR in strategic area development and strategic faculty hires within various Colleges
- Transform or build a showcase research building with user facilities, labs, offices, etc.

Communication and Support

- Created online database of NMSU researcher capabilities
- Initiated online newsletter
- Created Office of Strategic Initiatives to provide support
- Disseminate information on research opportunities to targeted faculty
- Establish open forums with VPR
- Recognize outstanding researchers

Internal Awards through VPR office

- Interdisciplinary Research Grant, IRG
- Graduate Research Enhancement Grant, GREG
- Undergraduate Research Incentive Grant, URIG

Dr. Chaitanya told members that he is selecting new chairs for some of the research clusters and that they will receive a stipend for their contributions. A portion of their annual evaluation will be reserved for the Vice President's input. Dr. Chaitanya told URC that the Institute of Applied Biosciences now involved in a search for two new faculty positions and that by this time next year a permanent Director will be elected. Dr. Daniel Howard is currently the Interim Director for this institute.

Dr. Chaitanya has asked the Office of Grants and Contracts to show all P.I.'s and Co-P.I.'s on a team involved in proposals so they all receive credit as multi P.I. work is being encouraged. The percentage of collaboration will be noted.

One suggestion regarding funding opportunities included having the private sector in research goals since federal funding has dropped.

3. URC Membership

At the URC meeting held on October 1st, discussion took place regarding the URC membership and whether the current set-up was most beneficial since it had not been studied since its inception. A suggested model was provided by Chair Sam Fernald that included one college representative (including PSL) and one cluster representative, two Ex Officio being the Vice President for Research and a representative from Faculty Senate, and the URC Chair and Past Chair. Dean Elizabeth Titus requested that the Library have a faculty representative on the council.

Discussion also included the continuing absence of some members and that a 2-miss rule should be considered. Dean Titus felt that this rule was punitive and suggested that at the end of the year the deans of any continuously absent council member be notified by the URC Chair. She also requested that gender balance and diversity be considered for this council.

The revised charter, once agreed upon, will be forwarded as a proposal to the Faculty Senate for approval. It is felt that this is a good time to request the URC charter be updated as the NMSU policy manual is also changing.

Sam Fernald

Past Chair Karl Wood made a motion to accept the new charter with inclusion of a faculty representative from the Library, the URC chair and past chair will come from the group which will bring the membership to 15, and that no two-miss rule be applied for members who are absent. Abbas Ghassemi seconded the motion. All were in favor except one who opposed so the majority ruled and the motion passed.

Chair Sam Fernald will provide a draft proposal at the next meeting.

Minutes by Frances Schumacher