

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
February 20, 2009

Present: Vimal Chaitanya, Sam Fernald, Brenda Benefit, Linda Lacey, Kevin Melendrez, Michele Nishiguchi, Igor Sevostianov, Meghan Starbuck, Roseann Thompson (Abbas Ghassemi), Myriam Torres, Karl Wood, Michael Young

Absent: Everett Egginton, Mohammed Hussain, Steve Leask, John Mexal, Rachel Navarro, Azadeh Osanloo, Elizabeth Titus, Enedina Vazquez, David Voelz, Patricia Wojahn,

1. Minutes from December 11, 2008 and January 16, 2009 were approved as presented.

2. URC Road Show

Chair Sam Fernald told URC the road show at the College of Ag lasted about an hour and twenty minutes. Some areas of concern mentioned by faculty members there are the research facilities on the west end of campus, and their jobs being jeopardized with the convention center and hotel currently being planned for that space. Questions were also posed about the IDC rate and who determines this, along with other questions and concerns.

In all, Chair Fernald said the road show was a success and the faculty who attended appreciated the opportunity to communicate concerns and ask questions directly.

3. Small Research Grant Program

After reviewing the draft "Small Research Grant Program" handout, it was agreed that the document would be updated to reflect the changes and sent out electronically for URC members' consent prior to being posted campus-wide. Depending on VPR budget, it is hoped to have this grant program be announced before April 2009.

4. URC Creative Scholarly Activity Award

The draft announcement/criteria was reviewed by URC members and a motion was made by Meghan Starbuck and seconded by Enedina Vazquez to open the nomination process this year, bypassing the down selection by the deans of the colleges to just two for early and two for distinguished careers (except A&S who had three per category) to as many who cared to nominate. The motion passed unanimously. Volunteers for the Award Committee include: Brenda Benefit (A&S), Kevin Melendez (BUS), Igor Sevostianov (ENGR), Meghan Starbuck (BUS) and Michael Young (HSS).

5. URC Charter

The URC Charter was reviewed and some suggestions were made. It was agreed that the charter would remove position appointments which will increase faculty representation. This will hopefully allow a quorum at the majority of URC meetings. Myriam Torres is the URC Faculty Senate representative who will assist in getting the charter scheduled for a future meeting.

6. IRG Review Process

This agenda item was skipped for lack of time.

7. Other

A concern was brought up regarding what is believed to be a change in compensation policy. It appears that 9-month faculty who are able to get various types of research grants and pay themselves for fall break, spring break and winter break are being told they may not receive the extra pay as they are being considered fully employed for their 9 month contract. They may therefore only pay themselves for summer. It was suggested that this shift in policy will result in fewer proposal submissions and possibly an increase in consulting which would be counterproductive to stimulating research, grants and proposals. Vimal Chaitanya said that he and the Arts and Sciences Research Dean Bob Czerniak have been working on a supplemental compensation policy and form that will be transparent and available to those who qualify. He said that some colleges on campus appear to be taking advantage of the current policy and that others were not. He also said that this new draft policy/form is currently at the provost's office.

Dr. Chaitanya said he would provide the new draft policy/form to URC at a future meeting. It was also suggested that the VPR office provide the current NMSU policy on supplemental compensation as a comparison. Dr. Chaitanya said he is willing to take faculty members' concerns to the provost regarding this. This topic will be included as future agenda.