

**University Research Council**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**August 21, 2009**

**Present:** Vimal Chaitanya, Jeffrey Arterburn, Joseph Berning, Phillip DeLeon, Sam Fernald, Shanna Ivey, Jim Kroger, Kevin Melendrez, John Mexal, Collin Payne, Meghan Starbuck, Steven Stochaj, Enedina Vazquez, Patricia Wojahn, Michael Young

**Absent:** Rachel Navarro, Michele Nishiguchi, Igor Sevostianov

1. Minutes from April 17, 2009 were approved as presented.
2. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were made and Vice President Vimal Chaitanya and URC Chair Meghan Starbuck welcomed returning and new members.

3. Chair-Elect Vote

The new URC charter states that the URC Executive Committee will have four members made up of the chair, chair-elect (vice chair), immediate past-chair, and a faculty representative. While the chair-elect position is normally voted on annually in March or April, it was felt that the URC needed to fill this position at this meeting so the Executive Committee would have four members for the academic year. In March or April of 2010, the chair-elect will be voted on again with their position starting July 1, 2010 to insure the Executive Committee always has a membership of four. It was decided to take a paper vote and the outcome was four votes for Michele Nishiguchi and three each for John Mexal and Phillip De Leon. Dr. Nishiguchi was unable to attend this meeting so her acceptance is pending.

4. Faculty Representative on Executive Committee Vote

It was also noted that the URC charter had been edited after Past Chair Sam Fernald submitted the document to Faculty Senate and Admin Council that changed the "Faculty Senate representative" on the Executive Committee to just "faculty representative." Patricia Wojahn volunteered and was nominated to be the faculty representative on the Executive Committee as she is also on the Faculty Senate. This will provide the URC with a Faculty Senate representative.

5. URC to Look at Research "Clusters"

Dr. Chaitanya gave URC a background summary on the research clusters. They include Biosciences; Information Sciences and Security Systems (ISSS); Natural Resource Sustainability and Renewal; Southwest & Border Regions Health, Education, Culture and Development; and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Space and Aerospace clusters. The Institute for Applied Biosciences was founded on the Bioscience cluster and Dr. Chaitanya would like to see the rest of the clusters form into institutes/centers as well. He asked the URC to conduct a study on the individual clusters to determine whether they have the potential to become

institutes/centers, if any should be supported, or if NMSU should continue to reference research clusters in its dialogues.

#### 6. White Paper on Research (In Collaboration with the Council of Research Centers)

Chair Starbuck told URC that the Council of Research Centers (CORC) wanted to commission a report on the benefits of doing research at NMSU. Chair Starbuck said that this is the opportune time to conduct this study and create the report/paper.

Chair Starbuck asked individual members what they thought were either benefits or hindrances to assist in getting the paper started. The following were suggested:

- use the Graduate Program Review results/statistics so that goals can be set
- how are programs evaluated (criteria publications, grant monies)
- use the research survey for its information that has already been collected (Dr. Chaitanya said he would share this survey with URC and that it does not discuss barriers, only what the perception is.)
- publicity and websites
- invite Jennifer Taylor to URC to discuss IDC
- recruit Faculty Senate
- OGC/SPA (as barriers)
- salary structure
- hiring at a certain level with formula to put some funds brought in, back into the researchers pocket
- increase funding and focus on research
- state money carries faculty who do not bring in external funding
- quality of program cannot be judged by number of grad students in program, placing students in jobs is a good measure
- limitations such as the number of agencies that can be targeted
- resources for grant preparation and centralization
- importance of institutional commitments to bring in large grants
- hiring practices
- identify resources already in place
- student credit hours seem to be a devaluating issue
- hi-lighting publications for those units who do not go for external funding
- articulate getting hammered for not having the student hours
- faculty positions are not getting filled when empty
- SCH are not independent of research as some grads come to NMSU for specific programs being run
- IDC tracked and accounted for
- how many graduate students hired off grants (also helps with retention)
- mentor new faculty by identifying potential collaborators
- encourage faculty to show their consulting
- some programs are only under grad which hurts research
- teaching load
- ARGIS fully implemented so PI's can see where their funding is

Chair Starbuck would like the URC to create a matrix for success. She suggested getting a student to look at other universities for comparison. A final suggestion was that once the report is finished, it should be routed through Academic Deans Council, Faculty Senate, and Admin Council.

## 7. Other

Dr. Chaitanya took this opportunity to give an update on the Graduate Program Review. The review put graduate programs into four categories of excellent, good, acceptable, or further review required. He met with Dean Lacey and Provost Cruzado this week and they want to continue the review at least every five years (one college at a time), and it will be done by the Grad Council and Dean Lacey with the possibility of external reviewers. Their recommendations will go to the Provost. Fourteen new grad programs are being considered to be added to the catalog so some will probably need to be removed. Dean Lacey will come up with a plan with VPR consultation. Dr. Chaitanya said he will have the next step at the next URC meeting.

Agenda topics “URC Fair (October 2<sup>nd</sup>)” and “Set goals for the academic year” were not broached due to lack of time and will be added to the agenda for September 18, 2009 meeting. Under topics revisited, the URC/VPR Road Show will also be included on the next agenda.

Minutes recorded by Frances Schumacher