

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
February 18, 2011

Present: Jeffrey Arterburn, Susan Beck, Joseph Berning, Wanda Borges, Vimal Chaitanya, Phillip DeLeon, Katherine Giles, Pierre Orelus, Steve Stochaj, Enedina Vazquez, Patricia Wojahn, Jack Wright, Michael Young

Absent: Derek Bailey, Sam Fernald, Shanna Ivey, Kevin Melendrez, Curtis Monger, Collin Payne, Igor Sevostianov, Meghan Starbuck

Guest: Sudha Murthy

1. Minutes from January 21, 2011 were approved as presented.
2. Strategic Plan for Research at NMSU – Sudha Murthy

Director of Strategic Initiatives Sudha Murthy asked the URC to consider forming a subcommittee of advisors that could assist her office in identifying on-campus research strengths as measured by funding, journal publications, publication impact factor, etc. She requested advice on large, multidisciplinary funding opportunities that NMSU should pursue as an institution based on our strengths (to be identified) along with new or future focus areas. Strategic partnerships should be considered as well. Ms. Murthy suggested that as she and the subcommittee meet, they may prioritize to make the scope more achievable in the near term.

Vimal Chaitanya provided a brief background on why this request was being made. He said that some of the colleges and the university as a whole do not have a strategic plan and the focus would be to ensure the university is doing the right things to be successful and what can be done to increase that success. VPR Chaitanya suggested that a university can't have a strategic research area without support in graduate programs and because of that, he hopes that graduate programs will be included in the strategic plan. The plan should also consider faculty lines/hires within specific areas during the next few years because of the budget situation that will complement a research master plan. The plan should be one that can be followed.

Ms. Murthy said that the scope of this project is a little beyond the OSI reach and she hoped URC would consider supporting this by agreeing to a URC subcommittee. Chair DeLeon said he would contact members within the near future to get support for this effort.

3. URC Award for Creative Scholarly Activity

Pierre Orelus, Katherine Giles, Joseph Berning and Wanda Borges volunteered to serve on the award review committee. Packets will be sent to them and a review meeting will be held prior to the next URC meeting.

4. Research and Economic Development Committee

VPR Chaitanya told URC that Steve Stochaj has been asked by President Couture to chair this committee and that they were being asked to provide names of faculty/staff to be URC nominees to the committee. It was suggested that the nominees should have some experience with intellectual property, have created a spinoff, or have experience with Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR). A suggestion was made to nominate Peter Lammers. Chair DeLeon said he will write to Dr. Lammers with this nominee request. VPR Chaitanya mentioned PSL's nominee will be Doug Davis.

5. Building the Vision Committee

Chair DeLeon provided the goals for the Building the Vision Committee which are: successful graduation, strengthen diversity, international reach by expanding collaboration, economic engine through research, effectiveness and efficiency, increase endowment by reaching out to alumni and friends, and culture of pride. He noted that research was mentioned in several of the goals and that President Couture has asked for a representative from research being nominated by the URC Chair. VPR Chaitanya said that Building the Vision will make recommendations on how to implement Living the Vision's conclusions. This will lead to a strategic plan for the university.

After discussion, Jeffrey Arterburn agreed to be the nominee.

6. International Recruitment/Credential Evaluation

A handout of the Faculty Senate proposition 11-10/11A amended 12/9/10 titled "Memorial Regarding Requirement of External Transcript Evaluation for Graduate Student Applicants Prior to Application Submission" was provided. Discussion commenced and concern was mentioned that the website still indicates that students will have to pay for their credential evaluation. It was agreed that Chair DeLeon will ask Provost Wilkins when that will be removed.

7. President Obama's Budget for Research and Higher Education – Outlook for 2011 and 2012

NMSU's federal relations firm Lewis-Burke Associates LLC provided VPR Chaitanya with a summary of President Obama's budget request for FY 2012. He said that 2011 will be very difficult to get funding and gave an example of a proposal getting awarded, but the agency holding back funding until they know if they will have the funds. He said the Lewis-Burke summary was the worst case scenario for 2011. For 2012, President Obama requests support for federal science funding as an important component of innovation and economic recovery for the nation, providing significant increases for scientific research and development programs.

8. Financial Incentives for Researchers

Michael Young told URC that providing financial incentives for research faculty is vital to getting top researchers interested in working at NMSU. He mentioned HSS trying to get a researcher from Oklahoma Health Sciences Center that is one of the top researchers in adolescent health in the country. He has brought in over \$10M in funding. He suggested that he get 60% of his salary and would buy out his time.

Dr. Young said this type of incentive would allow NMSU to attract and retain top researchers. This type of policy would also incentivize others on campus to bring in money that don't, because of the work involved in writing a proposal. Chair Elect Steve Stochaj said that NSF grants don't allow for academic year buy-out and that DOE is moving that way as well. VPR Chaitanya said that NMSU has done this and the example he gave was the faculty in ACES getting 12 months covered. He said this does not incentivize research. The ACES faculty were given the choice to go back to 10 months but they can build up to 4 months by bringing in extra dollars. Another example is the College of Engineering hiring a prolific leader in Civil Engineering. He would only consider pay that NMSU provides to a full professor. He was made an offer for 10 months with the idea that he can build two months extra on his research contract. VPR Chaitanya also mentioned PSL contracting with the government. They are allowed overtime for professional staff plus they pay at a higher salary level which allows more in the 40% of overhead return.

He asked if the URC would like him to bring in a seminar series to look at ways to provide financial incentives for faculty. Chair DeLeon suggested that URC look into this model to help promote research on campus and asked that we include this on the next meeting's agenda. He asked that URC talk to their colleagues at other universities to see what they are doing and bring the information to the next meeting.

Minutes by Frances Schumacher