

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
September 16, 2011

Present: Jeffrey Arterburn, Susan Beck, Wanda Borges, Vimal Chaitanya, Rebecca Creamer, Phillip DeLeon, Joanne Esparza, Steve Hanson, Shanna Ivey, Cathy Kinzer, Kevin Melendrez, Pierre Orelus, Steve Stochaj

Absent: Derek Bailey, Salim Bawazir, Sam Fernald, Katherine Giles, Kathleen Huttlinger, Collin Payne, Igor Sevostianov, Laura Thompson, Patricia Wojahn

1. Approval of Minutes for August 19, 2011

Minutes were approved as presented.

2. URC Fair – September 30, 2011 (Judges Needed)

Pierre Orelus, Patti Wojahn, Salim Bawazir and Phillip DeLeon volunteered to judge posters at the URC Fair. Members were encouraged to attend this 11th annual event.

3. Salary of Graduate Assistants on Contracts and Grants

A question was posed to URC regarding why NMSU's Human Resources determine the rate of pay for non-I&G graduate assistants. After discussion, it appeared that for some departments, this appears to be the process and for others not. Chair Steve Stochaj told members that when he submits a proposal, he can set the salary as he feels appropriate. Jeff Arterburn said that some grants have expected salary levels and some also allow for tuition. Phillip DeLeon said he includes one tuition stipend per RA built into the budget on proposals. When funded, he lets the dean's office know that the particular student should be paid by his index. Chair Stochaj gets tuition paid by writing to the registrar and providing a banner number and index. A suggestion was made that perhaps HR has certain staff working with certain colleges/departments and that the difference could be due to this. Chair Stochaj said that this process should be the same campus wide. He asked the college representative who brought this issue forward to try and see where it is being hung up at and confirm that it isn't within the college and actually with HR.

4. Distribution of Salary Savings and Indirect Costs

VPR Vimal Chaitanya told URC that this determination comes from the deans and the provost's office. Every college has a different rule as to what happens when you save your academic year salary. If a faculty member has enough funding to buy out an academic month, those funds go into a pool and the department doesn't get everything. With regard to IDC, every college gets 42.5% of the total their college brings in. After that it is up to the dean as to how much is distributed and to which department. Discussion commenced with

different models mentioned. The consensus was salary savings provided by a faculty member, should be given back to that person for reinvestment in research. Members also said that if more IDC funds were returned to researchers, it would benefit and further research. If the URC wants a uniform system, they may appeal to the provost.

Transparency in distribution of overhead was a topic for the Research Issues Processes Committee. Dr. Chaitanya told URC that the VPR website accounts for where every dollar of overhead money is spent. He suggested that URC could support his efforts and researchers by requesting his budget be based on a fixed percentage of IDC instead of a fixed budget. He gave the example of last fiscal year NMSU received \$198M in awards and the VPR budget remained the same. He said the President and Provost both feel that a percentage would be fair but may like to hear this recommendation from the grass roots. Dr. Chaitanya feels URC are the grass roots. Some suggestions were that with the awards expecting to drop from ARRA funding past, the percentage might not be best. Chair Stochaj suggested URC consider this until the next meeting and make a decision then on whether or not to support this request.

5. SPA's Stance on Interdisciplinary Efforts

Dr. Chaitanya was asked to bring this topic to URC on behalf of a department for URC's consideration. Per this department, SPA has a definition of what crosses departmental lines and on occasion has set a higher standard than is required by the federal government. Dr. Chaitanya said if a faculty member is teaching a course which crosses departmental boundaries, that faculty would have the opportunity to receive supplementary comp and it appears that this was not allowed in this case although the case wasn't completely clear. It was felt this was a teaching issue. Dr. Chaitanya said this could be a real issue for College of Education because many of their grants involve teaching. Dr. Chaitanya offered to get clarification from the department if he is given specific examples and bring it back to URC.

6. Grants vs. Contracts Handling by SPA – Vimal Chaitanya & Joanne Esparza

Dr. Chaitanya started the discussion and asked new URC member PSL representative Joanne Esparza to speak about the topics/cases as well. SPA has treated PSL contracts like grants would be treated. PSL has contracts that are open-ended with no definite end date. These may remain dormant for several years and then the contractor will ask PSL to do work. They attempt to place funds in the account only to find that SPA has closed the account. SPA also closes task orders which the government's has prerogative to revive task orders so they should not be closed either. Another case mentioned is sometime government agencies are slow in paying invoices. If SPA doesn't like the format of the report that PSL provides, they will have to work with the funding agency to get the report to a point that SPA will approve. SPA also sends agencies final invoices without communicating well with the P.I. to insure the deliverables are met. A specific case was mentioned of SPA returning \$200K to the agency and then receiving the payment for that amount. Ms. Esparza suggests that SPA policy or procedures be changed when dealing with contract as opposed to grants. (It is Office of Grants and Contracts primary duty to close out contracts so it is felt that SPA may be infringing on OGC's duties.

Dr. Arterburn suggested that the Effectiveness and Efficiency Committee should know about these issues and if needed, he will be pleased to take the issues to the Regents Professors. Dr. Chaitanya is hoping that the Research Processes Issues Committee will also take these concerns as an issue.

7. Digital Measures – Vimal Chaitanya & Steve Stochaj

Digital Measures will take information from ARGIS which captures what percent of effort each researcher has in any given project. For older projects, Digital Measures arbitrarily divides the total amount by number of P.I.'s and gives equal credit. Dr. Chaitanya has asked Bill Harty, Director for Research Administration to make sure it gets set up where the percentage is accurate. Chair Stochaj mentioned that Digital Measures takes 4 uploads a year with updated information. He also asked for a new field that will indicate when the information was last updated. This can be either manually entered or by ARGIS. Chair Stochaj said that end notes will be available as a citation tool. Mr. Harty can be reached at bharty@nmsu.edu or 646-3592 if anyone has questions.

8. State vs. Federal Per Diem for Travel – Susan Beck

Susan Beck provided members with handouts from the Albuquerque Journal that mentions the Legislative Finance Committee asking UNM to use state per diem instead of federal per diem. Dr. Chaitanya said President Couture's office is aware of this and will be working on it. Per the article 80% of reimbursements are paid by non-state sources so it did not make sense to reduce from federal to state per diem. Ms. Esparza mentioned that PSL would be considered non-compliant on their contracts if they were forced to use state rates. Another suggestion included using state rates for state travel and federal rates for other travel.