

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
October 12, 2012

Present: Rani Alexander, Jeffrey Arterburn, Salim Bawazir, Susan Beck, Rebecca Creamer, Muhammad Dawood, Joanne Esparza, Richard Fortin, O.D. Hadfield, Stephen Hanson, Shanna Ivey, Robert Smits, Steve Stochaj

Absent: Alexander “Sam” Fernald, Kathleen Huttlinger, Cathy Kinzer, Collin Payne, James Robinson, Laura Thompson

Guest: David Boje

1. NMSU Sustainability Council – David Boje, Chair

Dr. Boje gave a presentation on NMSU’s needs for the Sustainability Tracking and Reporting System (STARS) database which can improve NMSU’s ranking among sustainability-reporting universities. The presentation also showed how sustainability interconnects with the seven goals in “Building the Vision” and a history of sustainability at NMSU from 1963 to 2012. For more detailed information, go to <http://peaceaware.com/sustainability/>. Dr. Boje requested URC members to contact either him or Rani Alexander if they have more information that can be included on the timeline. He also requested that names of six faculty members who do research in sustainability be provided to him so he can contact them for potential work on the NMSU Sustainability Council. The VPR is providing a statement on the number of annual grants and other incentives from NMSU research council for a sustainable research project in the past several years. He asked that members go to the new database and suggest some non-ARGIS tracked sustainability research. Currently there is only one example there. NMSU’s Sustainability Council is getting close to scoring a Silver on the new STARS submission, and your help in the next two weeks before the deadline is greatly appreciated.

2. Approval of Minutes for September 14, 2012

Minutes were approved as presented.

3. HR Job Titles Limiting Granting Opportunities – Jeff Arterburn

Dr. Arterburn said his department has a grants club that has been focusing on bio-medical grants with faculty researchers across campus. One individual whose title is senior research scientist was looking at grant options available from NIH and found that there are developmental grants that are specifically for faculty. Because of this person’s title, she is not eligible to submit a proposal. There are grey areas on whether or not these staff members are eligible for applying for a grant. Dr. Arterburn’s department has looked at the grant mechanism in an RO3 small grant and it appears that this staff member should be eligible to apply. He suggested that the institution could help by providing supporting letters which documents the individual access to facilities and resources that are required for the work, and

that they have the support of the institution to do the research. Dr. Arterburn suggested that individuals in this situation should try to move into a research faculty position which will help with these issues well. Discussion commenced and VPR Chaitanya explained that President Couture had asked Human Resources to come up with a classification of people so that we would know exactly how to count those who are doing research and how many are not doing research. One of the important issues for NMSU is our ranking by the Carnegie Foundation. They ranked some universities very high research and NMSU only as high research. If you look at the amount of dollars brought in, NMSU brought in a lot more.

The question was how come these universities got a better ranking. We found that one of the categories was how many staff positions have a doctorate degree. NSF made a ruling that anybody with a faculty title, even if doing 100% research, can't be counted. Dr. Chaitanya said he doesn't know how far HR has progressed but they were told to come up with a system-wide title for people so that offices like mine can go to the listing and figure out how many are non-tenure track staff, non-tenure track faculty, etc. He suggested URC ask for an update.

Dr. Chaitanya said that he can authorize anyone the right to be a P.I. He said the current process is to have the Department Head and the Dean start the request, an email will suffice, saying they would like the VPR to consider this particular person to be allowed to be a P.I. A resume should be attached, then he will forward the request to Neta Fernandez in the Office of Grants and Contracts stating this person has the eligibility in my opinion to be a P.I. As soon as they get that message from Dr. Chaitanya, they will process the proposal. In terms of the institutional support letter, the draft sent to the VPR office should have enough detail of the support the person will have, mentioned. This will allow the agency to know the institution is supportive. This type of letter should be provided to the VPR office at least a week before the proposal submission date/deadline.

4. URC Fair Update

Frances Schumacher told URC that the URC Fair held on October 5th had 40 registrants. Judges for the poster competition included Kathleen Huttlinger and Susan Beck plus two prior URC members Pierre Orelus and Wanda Borges. First place went to Dr. Nadipuram Prasad for "The HYPER Project: Harvesting Hydropower from Low-head Waterways." Second place went to Dr. Stephen Hanson for "Examination of Race Structure for Verticillium Dahlia Isolates Affecting Chile Pepper Production in New Mexico." There was a four-way tie for third place; Nishath Ranasinghe for "Geometric Spreading," Eshan Dahal for "How do the Physiocochemical Properties of Nanoparticles Influence their Biological Behavior," Gin Morgan for "Mother-Infant Interactional Patterns Predict Infant Learning," and Angela Muhanga for "Network Analysis of Brain Imaging Data."

5. Administration & Finance Strategic Plan Interview

Chair Shanna Ivey said the Administration & Finance office has brought in a consultant that interviewed over 700 people to assist with their strategic plan. She was asked what in a

researchers view, would make their jobs easier. Chair Ivey has the research processes issues information with her which helped form some of the dialog. She said that Human Resources and Sponsored Projects Accounting seemed to get the most criticism. It is not known whether URC and CADRe (who was invited to the same meeting) will have access to the final report.

6. Future Directions

Chair Ivey told URC that the URC has become more prominent on campus and that Dr. Pacheco wants to continue with the Research Processes Committee. She asked for volunteers to serve on this committee. Dr. Chaitanya said the VPR office would provide the support work. Some concerns mentioned by members were PSL having on-going issues, core operational facilities and the inability to make additional faculty hires. Joanne Esparza volunteered to represent PSL. URC will continue working with the Research Processes Issues as a future direction.

Rani Alexander suggested that a Research Academy similar to the Teaching Academy working in parallel with URC would be helpful for faculty and staff with training. Dr. Chaitanya said that the VPR office has already started a Research Academy and workshops are now being offered through this academy.

7. Indian Universities Collaboration – Vimal Chaitanya

Dr. Chaitanya provided URC with a presentation of his recent trip to India. He spoke about the different universities and where he sees opportunities for further collaboration. Anyone interested in a copy of this presentation is encouraged to ask the VPR office.

8. Other

Presidential Search – Chair Ivey suggested to URC that they consider asking about being on the search committee for NMSU's president. Another option would be to request special time with the candidates when they are brought to campus as was the case with Provost Wilkins. URC had specific time set aside during the interviews for Provost. It was also suggested that President Pacheco be invited to a future meeting.

Minutes by Frances Schumacher