

University Research Council
Approved Minutes
March 14, 2014

Present: Rani Alexander, Jeffrey Arterburn, Susan Beck, Rebecca Creamer, Joanne Esparza, Richard Fortin, Stephen Hanson, Shanna Ivey, Cathy Kinzer, Cathy Ortega-Klett (for Sam Fernald), James Robinson, Steve Stochaj

Absent: Matthias Burkardt, Vimal Chaitanya, Muhammad Dawood, O.D. Hadfield, Jill McDonald, Mary O'Connell, Hari Sankaran, Robert Smits, Mingjun Wei

1. Approval of Minutes for November 8, 2013 and February 14, 2014

Minutes were approved as presented.

2. Attendance at VPR-Hosted Research Opportunities

URC members were encouraged to attend the events hosted by the VPR office such as the open sessions held for NMSU's federal relations firm, Lewis-Burke Associates. It was mentioned that few faculty members attended.

3. Role of URC in Enhancing NMSU's Research

The message from VPR Chaitanya who could not attend this meeting, was council members should provide information dissemination and leadership at their college for all research topics. A member suggested that URC in the past several years has been looking at ways to fix things such as the research processes and that perhaps it's time to look at emerging research areas that can be built strategically. It was also suggested the Council of Associate Deans for Research (CADRe) could be putting together teams to go after these emerging areas. They could inform potential collaborating faculty that they have visited with certain agencies or legislators and ask who the researchers know that would fit.

Chair Hanson said that this would be a good topic to take up with CADRe when they visit at the next URC meeting. This area could be more productive and URC can provide expertise, make connections and facilitate; however having said that, this is really an area that administration should play a more active role in. Noted for CADRe agenda is how to be more efficient at going after large proposals or calls and asking the deans to be more proactive in getting the information out and reaching out to URC to help assemble groups to go after the opportunities.

Another comment made was regarding large interdisciplinary grants with other universities. If one compares the difference between what other research deans and grants groups do, NMSU is not doing any of that. NMSU doesn't hustle with the agencies, and NMSU doesn't take advantage of our legislators. Because of other universities' strong relationship with agencies, they know about calls before they come out.

4. CADRe Update and Proposed Visit of CADRe and Compliance to URC

Chair Hanson sits on CADRe whose membership includes the URC Chair. He provided an update from their recent meeting at which Associate Vice President for Research Integrity Luis Vazquez was present giving an update on the IRB processes. Dr. Vazquez asked CADRe to consider filling the role of the IRB task force as the task force seems to be looking at personal issues on individual applications instead of looking at ways to enhance the whole system and/or process. Discussion commenced and it was suggested that perhaps there are several levels of problems including the user interface with Maestro, the IRB electronic system. A suggestion made was to pick a few major users across campus for a set period of time, and ask them to work on improving the user interface. The Compliance office has the challenge of being understaffed as well. It was brought out that other institutions with a load of 800-1000 applications a year have 3.0 FTE devoted to IRB and NMSU has only 0.7. This year NMSU Compliance is on track for 1100 application submissions.

A new officer for corporation development at Arrowhead visited CADRe and requested a listing of faculty expertise and equipment; however CADRe indicated they have submitted this information several times in the past and felt it would be more productive if when Arrowhead receives interest from private industry that they have a website where they post NMSU's approach to locating someone who can fill the request, similar to government grant calls. This would negate the need for CADRe to market college or faculty member expertise.

Chair Hanson said that this topic leads into the Digital Measures which is having an overhaul. Steve Stochaj who is on the committee reported that often times New Mexico legislators would like to know what areas faculty members are working in and Digital Measures should be providing that information. Apparently there will be a default area that faculty members can add their expertise to and it will also have an option for key words.

Also discussed at CADRe were some of the colleges have faculty who have grant buy-outs from teaching time. The deans are concerned that this might be a backdoor into supplemental comp which might have faculty gaming the system for financial benefits. Chair Hanson said that there could be some who might game the system, but the question is how to reward an overachiever. He said the concept of incentivizing faculty was not widely permeated in the room; however it was mentioned that if one buys themselves out of teaching time using grant funding, the funding agency will expect you to do research during the time you were to teach. Different agencies have different practices with regards to funding course release; NSF typically does not allow course buy out but NIH routinely does. A suggestion for CADRe was when a faculty buys out course time using grant/contract funding; the money should go into a designated account for the PI to use to hire staff. This would ensure that the full amount of awarded funds are directly allocated to provide release, and would give the faculty/Departments the ability to plan for and maintain consistency in hiring the necessary personnel. Chair Hanson said CADRe agreed on two things, the rules really don't have a good work-around and there is no clear way to incentivize faculty. In Engineering, if you teach an overload, you get compensated and it isn't understood why a researcher can't get compensated for the administrative overload that it takes to run a grant. Not the scientific work, but the administrative work. Some members said there are ways.

For the last topic Chair Hanson wanted to inform URC about a recent University Budget Committee meeting. Provost Howard mentioned the need to get beyond the risk adverse culture at NMSU because there has been no audit finding in years. This would indicate missed opportunities. Chair Hanson brought up the email he sent to URC the day after the legislature approved the state budget (see attached for record), in which Provost Howard mentioned the increase in budget. He asked for feedback on his wish list which was to increase the number of grad assistants or to increase their pay. Chair Hanson received responses from URC via email, he also spoke with the molecular biology program, other departments and the overall response was both are needed. The other unanimous request is tuition waivers. Discussion commenced and it was said that one size does not fit all in regard to pay. Some colleges are paying more than others. Chair Hanson will send feedback from URC discussion to the Provost.

5. Chair Elect Vote

URC was asked to send names to Frances Schumacher no later than April 4th so a ballot can be created and provided at the next URC meeting being held on April 11th.

6. URC Award Review Panel

Rebecca Creamer, Cathy Kinzer and Shanna Ivey volunteered to serve on the review panel.

Minutes by Frances Schumacher

Attachment to URC Minutes - March 14, 2104

From: Hanson, Stephen
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 10:57 AM
To: M. Frances Schumacher
Subject: University Budget Committee meeting questions

URC members,

The University Budget Committee met yesterday and discussed a number of items including an overview of the budget approved by the legislature. I will provide a summary at our next meeting. While there are a few details to be resolved and the Governor could still veto specific lines in the budget it looks to be an improvement over the budgets we have had the past few years with some potential discretionary money in it. A potential tuition increase and negotiations with the Regents on how to use it may also enhance NMSU's budget going forward. A lot is still up in the air but things are looking like they are going up rather than down. A nice change.

Provost Howard was at the meeting and indicated that he and President Carruthers would like input from faculty on several items. Please remember that these are all tentative and not guaranteed. Provost Howard framed these questions as helping him refine his wish list and not as final decisions to be made.

There may be room in the budget to increase funding for graduate assistantships. If this comes to pass, the Provost would like to know if it would be more important to increase the number of assistantships or to use the funds to increase the amount paid per assistantship. Add more grad assistants or pay grad assistants more?

The budget will likely include faculty and staff pay increases. How much is yet to be determined and may have some wiggle in it. The Provost would like to have feedback on whether putting \$ into things like additional faculty lines, graduate assistantships, library support, seed funding programs (like another round of the I&G seed proposals that we had last year), or other areas that improve our work environment would improve morale as much as a larger pay increase. Is our morale boosted most by a larger raise or would more faculty lines, better support for library, more / better assistantships, etc also increase morale if coupled with a raise, albeit a smaller one?

The easy answer is to have it all. More and better assistantships, better libraries and more faculty lines along with bigger raises, etc. However, while the budget looks better than past years it is still not great and decisions like this will need to be made. I would only note this is the first time in my memory that upper admin has sought our feedback on questions like these. So, I'll look forward to your feedback and discussing these and related items at our next meeting.

SFH
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