

**University Research Council**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**September 2, 2015**

**Present:** Susan Beck, Jamie Bronstein, Henry Cathey, Vimal Chaitanya, Heejung Chun, Maria Gurrola, Kathryn Hanley, Stephen Hanson, Clint Loest, Hongmei Luo, Frances Nedjat-Haiem, Mihai Niculescu, Julie Rice, Manoj Shukla, Mingjun Wei

**Absent:** Jeffrey Arterburn, Sam Fernald, Cathy Kinzer, Hari Sankaran, Karin Wiburg

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Kathryn Hanley asked members to introduce themselves and welcomed everyone. She said that the URC will need a Faculty Senate representative and an additional Arts & Sciences representative to be added to the council while she is acting as Chair which is according to NMSU policy 5.94 Research.

2. Approval of Draft Minutes for March 18, 2015 and April 15, 2015

Minutes were approved. Chair Hanley had two topics to carry over from last semester which were noted in the minutes. They are to extend the term for URC Chair to two years instead of one and to hold an NSF Day at NMSU.

3. URC Fair

- a) It was suggested that the URC Fair include not only faculty posters/presentation but to also invite graduate students working on national and international scholarships or fellowships. The VPR office has requests to HR and ICT to retrieve this information.
- b) Volunteers were requested for poster judges. Chair Hanley, Past Chair Steve Hanson, and Maria Gurrola all offered to assist.

4. IRG & GREG Data Collection Follow-up

Chair Hanley suggested that this data request might have had more success if the format had been via website instead of spreadsheet and perhaps fewer questions asked to determine the success of the Interdisciplinary Research Grant (IRG) and the Graduate Research Enhancement Grant (GREG). She will contact individuals personally for those remaining on the list who have not responded with information.

5. Public Perception of Federal Funding for Research

VPR Vimal Chaitanya told members he had attended a webinar organized by consultants of APLU and AAU where information was provided on the public's perception of Federal funding for research. The slides he provided visually were not to be cited or published so he only discussed the findings. Some points he wanted to cover included the following:

- Public perception of Federal support for basic science is not viewed positively primarily because of the manner in which it is communicated.

- American voters want a strong focus on the economy, and control of federal spending. While approval of federal funding for scientific research is high, they want funding levels to remain the same. Yet voters overwhelmingly believe the US should remain a global leader in science and technology.
- Topping the list of most important contribution science can make to society is the finding of new medicines and curing diseases followed by energy technologies and defense related research.
- Areas related to defense, health, energy, security etc. scored higher with most voters.

VPR Chaitanya would like for NMSU to come up with their own 5 to 10 examples of fundamental or basic research supported by Federal funding that will later lead to a breakthrough in application on technology development.

#### 6. Graduate Student Health Insurance Policy

Chair Hanley suggested that URC should be cognizant of and express concern for change in the graduate student health insurance policy. She asked for members experience with this topic. In the past they were receiving insurance through benefits but now they are not. Discussion commenced. It was determined that the Provost should be invited to visit with URC in the future and he should not be left “off the hook” so to speak, for the state and welfare of graduate students because researchers’ productivity is highly related to their RAs and TAs ability to function in their environment.

#### 7. Other

Chair Hanley asked members to consider agenda topics for future meetings. A suggestion included to look at the IRB process and invite the Chair to the next meeting. Concern was mentioned that if the process is slow now, that the Burrell School of Medicine is going to slow it down more. Another comment was not to blame the IRB process because the issue is lack of funding to staff them at appropriate levels. Chair Hanley said part of the URC’s mission is to advocate for researchers and make suggestions on what might improve the process. Opening the dialog with the IRB Chair, and then seeing if URC can assist will be good first steps.

Another topic for consideration is the return of overhead back to the researchers.