UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COUNCIL
Minutes for 19 January 2010
Career Development Conference Room/JET 387


Ex-Officio Members Present: Ed Brewer, Joseph Cazier, David Dickinson, Megan Johnson

Absent: Bill Bauldry, Les Bolt, Kristan Cockerill, Lisa Curtin, Jennifer Snodgrass, John Pine

1. Call to order, introductions and welcome – Edelma Huntley
   A. Meeting called to order at 4:05 p.m.
   B. Introduction of new member, Lynn Gregory from the Department of Communication.

2. Approval of the minutes
   A. It was moved (Holly Hirst) that the minutes from the 17 November 2009 URC meeting be approved with the following edit: Call to order was 4:05pm, not 5:05pm.
   B. Motion carried. None opposed. One abstention (Lynn Gregory).
   C. Note: Edelma suggested that the minutes may need to be displayed on a screen at future meetings.

3. Reports
   A. Proposal Development Team – Pollyanne Frantz
      1) Heather Young, Proposal Development Assistant, has contacted all declined URC applicants for consultations with their RDO.
         a) All declined applicants are from either CAS (Bauldry) or CFAA (Brewer).
         b) Aim to conduct consultations with time for applicants to resubmit for March deadline.
      2) Triangle Census Research Data Center (TCRDC) workshops are Thursday, January 21st and Friday, January 22.
         a) Appalachian belongs to consortium (UNC system and Duke University) which allows faculty to access TCRDC materials free. A wealth of data is available.
         b) There will be an internal competition to fund two awards of $500 each to support travel to the site.
            • Projects approved by the TCRDC will be eligible for support.
              Approval can take up to nine months for census data, because high security clearance is required. The data contain personal identifiers;
and the Census Bureau must be convinced that the research is valid. Researchers must use the data on site.

• Support will continue until the funding has been depleted.
• The TCRDC is the only census center in the southeast.

3) Grants Resource Center “USDA Programs” web conference is Tuesday, January 26.
   a) Appalachian should be eligible for funding, because the USDA has added obesity, nutrition, renewable fuels, etc. as focus areas.
   b) The workshop, which will be held in the Academic Affairs conference room (BB Dougherty, 2nd floor) is pretty full, but if you are interested in attending contact Heather Young to reserve a space.

4) The ORSP website (www.orsp.appstate.edu) has the full event schedule.

B. Sponsored Programs – Susan M. McCracken
1) The volume of stimulus-funded proposals is diminishing.
2) RAMSeS
   a) ORSP is transitioning to an online database which was developed at UNC-CH for proposal submission and tracking.
   b) RAMSeS is currently for internal ORSP use, but ORSP hopes to do a strategic roll out this spring. The goal is to have the system in place by fall for testing by faculty.
   c) Everything is electronic, eliminating the need for paper.
3) Jo Harris is working part-time in ORSP to assist with the increasing volume of proposal submissions.

C. Research Compliance – Julie Taubman
1) Physicians from Watauga Medical Center have contacted the office to schedule a meeting regarding a partnership with Appalachian’s IRB.
2) The Memo of Understanding with DHMRI in Kannapolis has been signed and faculty may now work with the DHMRI IACUC.
3) Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
   a. Emails have gone out to the campus community alerting researchers to the recent new NSF RCR requirements.
   b. The office is sending a survey to the department chairs to identify courses and other resources that will fulfill RCR requirements. The office also hopes to determine whether there is an interest in a RCR certificate?
   c. The office is trying to invite external speakers to assist faculty with developing RCR plans. Dr. Rebecca Rufty from NC State will speak at the March URC meeting. She oversees the NCSU RCR implementation.
4) The Institutional Bio-safety Council (IBC) has been formed.
   a. Dr. Scott Collier from HLES will serve as chair.
   b. The committee is responsible for reviewing all research involving Recombinant DNA and select agents and possibly research where there is a biohazard risk.
   c. Appalachian currently lacks bio-safety policies and procedures. The committee will address these issues.
5) Radiation safety continues to be an issue. Dr. Brian Raichle from the Department of Technology is the Radiation Safety Officer, but Appalachian has no policy in place. The office has hired a graduate student to create an inventory of materials.

6) **Note:** Edelma noted that a year ago Appalachian had no Office of Research Protections. The office has been building policies and procedures from scratch. Furthermore, recently there has been heightened federal scrutiny.

7) **Question:** Alan asked if the IBC would act as a recommending body to IRB and if it could shut down a project.

   **Answer:** Julie responded that the committees might work together on projects requiring review by both. Edelma added that the office is currently receiving thesis proposals that may need to be reviewed by both.

**D. Federal Relations – Meredith Whitfield**

1) President Obama signed the omnibus appropriations bill into law in November. It contained one earmark ($100k) for Appalachian which will fund equipment and facilities related to rural health.

2) Six earmark projects that have been selected to move forward for next year.
   a) Meredith and Susan McCracken will travel to DC during the second week in February to present the proposals to the NC federal delegation.

3) The 2011 call for proposals will be forthcoming in the next week.

**E. Corporate and Foundation Relations – John Krumrine**

1) A team from Appalachian, including the Chancellor, will visit Microsoft in February for 2 days of executive briefings. Microsoft is interested in partnerships with faculty who work with touch screen technology, gaming, and technology-supported pedagogy.

2) Visit to Honeywell last week with Dean Glenda Treadaway (CFAA).
   a. Possibility of future internships and access to Honeywell Foundation for the Arts.
   b. Met with Larry Kittelberger, Senior Vice President of Technology and Operations. He is also an Independent Director and Chairman of the Technology Strategy Committee for Arbitron Corporation. This meeting may result in future opportunities for Appalachian. Larry would like to introduce John Chambers of Cisco to Appalachian; this would be a good connection.

3) William Austin from the NC Military foundation would like to visit campus. Will discuss organizing the meeting with Pollyanne.

4) **Note:** Edelma added that Microsoft is very interested in pedagogy, gaming technology and touch screen technology.

5) **Question:** Leslie asked if John was in contact with Dr. Dee Parks in Computer Science.

   **Answer:** John said that he is not but would like to speak with her.

**F. Graduate School – Holly Hirst**
1) End of term processing was challenging. 70 students did not make the grade mainly because faculty did not submit grades or submitted inaccurate grades. The list has been whittled down to 42.

2) Indirect funds have been set aside for graduate research projects. These projects will be coordinated through the Office of Student Research.

3) Graduate Research Associate Mentoring (GRAM) Program
   a. Spring seminar topics include RCR, writing for research and preparing for jobs outside of academia.

4) Currently uncertain about funding for assistantships.
   a. Two-year GRAM assistantships will be funded.
   b. A big unknown is how the change of Provost will affect assistantship funding.

5) Note: Edelma reported that there might be another budget freeze.

6) Questions:
   a. Alan asked if GRAM funding came from the indirect budget.
      Answer: Edelma answered that it is state funds. Faculty members must apply for funding to hire a graduate research assistant. The program was open to all faculty not just those in departments with graduate programs. The student must maintain a 3.3 GPA. Assistantships are guaranteed for two years. The stipend is $9000 for the academic year plus $1000 for research per year (travel, supplies, etc.). The office was able to fund ten one-year awards and ten two-year awards. The two-year awards will continue, but there may not be new awards.
   b. John pointed out that he had heard that day about Alan’s students being asked to present at a national conference.
      Alan reported that 15 students from Appalachian had submitted abstracts. Ten students have been accepted. The conference will be held at the University of Montana. John added that five of the students are in Music (out of 34 national awards in Music). Alan noted that one was mentored by Jennifer Snodgrass and another by new faculty member, Reeves Schulstad.

G. Report and Announcements from the Dean – Edelma Huntley

1) Proposals funded with contingencies
   a. Four proposals with contingencies were conditionally funded in the fall. The office sent letters asking the applicants to address the URC’s questions by a certain date. Three of the four responded. The fourth has been notified that the project is now ineligible for funding from the Fall 2009 cycle.

2) Budget updates
   a. The URC has $54000.00 to award during the Spring 2010 cycle.

3) Major initiatives
   a. An external consultant to review ORSP and research possibilities will look at the office’s current staff and resources and discuss future dreams. He will help to identify strategies for encouraging departments with the capacity to seek external funding to do so.
We hope the consultant will identify ways to secure more external funding. Appalachian needs a larger indirect ($850,000.00 last year); double would be good. An increased URC budget of $200,000.00 per year is a goal.

b. Faculty administrative internships. The office will offer two faculty administrative internships during the fall semester. These interns will work with the Dean on special initiatives. The goal is to give faculty members a chance to see if they would like to be administrators.
   • There will be one intern in graduate education and one in research administration. The intern will receive one course release and will be required to complete a major project in the appropriate area.
   • Watch for the announcement.

4. Discussion items

A. URC grant application
   1) Guidelines
      a. Add award limit to guidelines and application.
   2) Budget – Susan M. McCracken
      a. Because no one included fringe benefits, she suggests using a separate excel worksheet with space for these percentages.
      b. Note: Holly suggested creating a fillable PDF and offered to assist.
      c. Question: David asked if there are other ways to factor a student into a grant.
         Answer: Susan M. replied that students must be paid on an hourly basis through HR. Holly added that a researcher can pay a graduate assistant a lump sum, but fringe benefits must still be included or pay will be reduced.

B. Resubmissions
   1) Question: Alan asked if the URC could be informed about resubmission and revisions. Or, does the application need to be blind?
      a. Susan M. asked if there is an applicant database.
      b. Edelma noted that Pollyanne might like to know who needs assistance.
      c. Susan M. asked if it makes a difference whether a proposal is a resubmission, especially if it was close to being funded.
      d. Karla added that she prefers blind applications, as she does not want there to be a sense that making suggested changes will result in funding.
      e. Leslie stated that NIH went to a “three strikes and you’re out” policy.
         Agrees that it is good to know about resubmission because of changes to the application due to comments. It is unfair to ask an applicant to make changes only to ask him to change it back the next time. See both sides. Perhaps the URC should consider an application limit.
      f. Ed asked what the letter to declined applicants says. Is scoring information included? Edelma answered that the letter says to resubmit after revision. The applicant’s score is not included.
g. Susan S. suggested that it is implied that the consultation and revision may help the applicant get funding. Agrees that it is helpful to know about resubmissions.

h. Holly concurred that it is good to know how many times a faculty member has applied for URC funding. Are the proposals on the same subject? Suggests adding a check box to the application. Added that the proposals are on the Q-drive if URC members want to check for resubmissions.

i. Leslie suggested linking the unsanitized review to the resubmission.

j. Cindy added that the review process is designed to improve applications. She wants to see that applicants are taking the feedback seriously. Questions whether the URC is obligated to fund a project if applicant makes the requested revisions. Is there a level playing field? Are we biased?

   Ed added that the URC can also be biased the other way if the feedback is ignored.

k. Karla asked if the URC is trying to reward particular faculty. Well-established faculty? New faculty? Should applications be considered on merit alone?

   Edelma responded that the URC traditionally tried to reward new faculty. She hopes to have two tiers in the future (or three if well-established faculty members change direction).

   Karla reiterated that she thinks merit only should be considered.

l. Leslie argued that knowing about resubmissions is more of a logistical issue. The URC should be aware of past submissions.

m. Steve agreed that a checkbox on the application would be a good idea. Edelma asked if everyone agreed to the addition of a checkbox.

   • Susan M. suggested asking for titles of previous funded or unfunded proposals, because she is concerned that a checkbox sends the wrong impression.

   • Note: The application currently asks for a list of previous awards.

   • Susan S. suggested asking if the researcher had applied for URC funding in the past three years.

   • Edelma agreed that that would trigger a search.

C. Conflict of interest

   1) Julie suggested that a question on conflict of interest be added to the application.

   2) Additionally, URC members should excuse themselves from reviewing and/or voting if they have a conflict of interest.

D. Category weight

   1) Question: John asked if each category is weighted the same and suggested that such a system might be appropriate for transparency.

   a) Edelma asked if it would be appropriate to rank the categories.

   b) Leslie suggested open discussion rather than category ranking, because she thinks points will get moved as needed anyway.
E. Conclusions
   1) Edelma will send out a fillable budget for trial.
   2) Additions to the guidelines
      a. Limit added to be added to each document.
      b. Fillable budget form.
      c. Question about past URC applications to be added.
      d. Question about conflict of interest to be added.

5. Other: None.

6. Adjournment

   A. It was moved (Karla Rusch) that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was
      adjourned at 5:20pm.