

Committee on Research (COR)

Minutes of Meeting

Friday, October 9, 2015

KL 232

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Research met at 1:00 pm on October 9, 2015 in Room 232 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Ajay Gopinathan presiding.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Gopinathan welcomed members and made introductions. He announced that committee member Wiebe will represent COR on the University Committee on Research Policy and member Nicholson will serve on the Periodic Review Oversight Committee.

A COR representative is needed for the newly-created Senate Library and Scholarly Communications Committee.

ACTION: Chair Gopinathan will ask for volunteers via email after this meeting.

II. Consent Calendar

ACTION: Today's agenda was approved as presented.

III. Consultation with Provost/EVC Peterson and VCORED Traina

COR members held a brief discussion on the distribution of indirect cost return funds. Chair Gopinathan mentioned that per a communication from the VCORED to the faculty at the end of spring semester 2015, a percentage will be allocated to deans and ORU directors. VCORED Traina stated that the Provost and Chancellor decided on no distribution to these areas at this time due to a serious cash flow problem and so funds will be reserved for faculty start up packages. COR members inquired about support for bridge funding or maintenance of equipment. The Provost replied that the feedback he often receives from faculty members is the need for 1) bridge funding for unanticipated expenses for research, 2) funding for equipment, 3) funding for faculty research grants, 4) cost sharing, and 5) lab maintenance. The Provost will

handle faculty start up packages, but any issues related to lab renovations, matching funds, and equipment, etc. is under the VCORED's purview.

The Provost acknowledged that the campus has made the first step of allocating some indirect cost funds to PIs, but allocating to deans and ORUs will be placed on hold until the expense-side priorities are determined. Both the Provost and the VCORED have requested budgets from all units that report to them but have not received quantitative rationale for the higher budget requests.

COR members then broached the subject of the Senate faculty grants program and reminded the Provost of the requests made COR in AY 13-14 and AY 14-15 on increasing the amount of funds available for this program. In spring of the last academic year, after conducting an informal survey of previous Senate grant awardees and researching policies at other UC campuses, COR sent a detailed memo to the Provost suggesting the specific dollar amount of funding by which the grants program could benefit. At this meeting, the Provost acknowledged that COR's request scales to faculty numbers and he found the request to be reasonable and thoughtful.

The Provost asked COR members how they view these Senate research grants, whether the awards are seen as seed money, travel money, or for other items. COR members responded that in the sciences, the awards are helpful for seed money to gather preliminary data for future projects. In social sciences and humanities, it varies: the funds are used for travel support, as a stop-gap measure, or can lead to MRI grants. The Provost stated that he will make another attempt to increase the funding for the Senate faculty grants program. It will be a difficult request, as the amount of money that he is allocated for his own purposes has already been used for lab renovations during the move of faculty members from SE 1 to SE 2.

VCORED Traina pointed out that there is a separate budget for mandatory cost sharing. Approximately \$400,000 is available in central funds on a revolving basis (there is an annual requirement for mandatory cost sharing). The Provost stated that the campus has always honored matching funds requirements and to his knowledge, no faculty member has failed to submit a proposal due to a lack of matching funds commitment.

ACTION: Provost/EVC Peterson will try to receive approval for increasing the funding for the Senate research faculty grants and will keep COR informed of his efforts.

IV. Research Units Policies

In 2014, the Senate approved the comprehensive set of policies drafted by COR in AY 13-14 on the establishment and review of ORUs, including centers and core facilities. These comprehensive policies were distributed widely to the campus. Subsequently, the Provost/EVC drafted his own policy on centers and the VCRED drafted a clarification process on ORUs. The Senate reviewed both of these policies and requested, via memos from Division Council in AY 14-15, the need for one, streamlined, campus policy on the establishment and review of ORUs, centers, and core facilities.

VCORED Traina announced that he is currently revising his ORU policy in response to Senate committee comments. The Provost/EVC stated that he will plan to revise his policy on centers and will return to the Senate for review and concurrence.

ACTION: Provost/EVC Peterson and VCORED Traina to submit their revised policies to COR for review. COR will incorporate into one, comprehensive, campus policy on the establishment and review of research units.

V. Limited Submission Proposals

In AY 14-15, COR requested that VCORED Traina submit the current procedures for limited submission proposals.

Chair Gopinathan requested that the timeline include the whole year so that faculty members can be aware of the schedule and prepare accordingly. VCORED Traina confirmed that he will include this revision.

ACTION: VCORED Traina will revise the limited submission procedures to include a timeline that extends throughout the year.

COR members raised the issue of faculty members being denied by certain foundations. VCORED responded that foundations re-examine their lists once every

five years and they are restricted by their bylaws. In addition, foundations are required to cease funding one awardee before accepting another. While campuses may contact the foundations each year with inquiries, the foundations are restricted by their limited amount of funds.

It was mentioned that the Pew Charitable Trusts awarded a proposal from UCM for the first time in the campus's history (PI – Clarissa Nobile, SNS).

VCORED Traina stated that often, a faculty member discovers a funding opportunity heretofore unknown and requests to submit a proposal outside of the limited submission process. Traina asked COR members if they think he should make these exceptions and allow faculty members to submit proposals whenever they find opportunities.

COR members suggested that more faculty input is needed at the school level. VCORED Traina replied that he asks several faculty members each year to help review proposals but rarely, if ever, get volunteers, so he must complete the reviews on his own. COR members discussed ways to empanel a standing review committee but this is a problem given UCM's small number of faculty.

ACTION: COR to write a memo to VCORED Traina that includes suggestions on how to engage faculty members in the proposal reviewing process and ideas on streamlining the limited submission process.

The last item of discussion with the Provost/EVC was faculty members' concerns with the new buildings under the 2020 project. The assignable square footage will be less than that at other research universities, and, faculty members are concerned over the fitting of laboratory spaces. The Provost/EVC responded that input was sought and received from faculty members over the past two years and encouraged them to contact him with specific areas of concern.

VI. Senate Faculty Research Grants – Evaluation and Criteria

Each year, COR spends a great deal of time evaluating the process and criteria for Senate awards. The committee always attempts to make the process more manageable and transparent. COR members agreed to keep last year's new practice of requiring the school executive committees to complete the first level of review and

submit their rankings to COR for final review and selection. One of the biggest issues is the workload of reviewing each proposal and reviewing proposals outside of one's expertise. While COR tries to make the scoring criteria as objective as possible, some judgement calls must be made; in addition, COR also has to be mindful of awarding a similar amount of proposals across the schools. Finally, COR must decide what these grants are intended to be: seed money, travel support, etc.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Attest:

Ajay Gopinathan, COR Chair