Minutes of the Meeting of the Penn State Faculty Senate Committee on Research
September 9, 2014

8:30 – 10:30 am


Members Absent: John Hanold, Andrey Krasilnikov, Shawn Lichvar

1. Introductions. Amit Sharma welcomed new and returning committee members. Review of the Purpose of the Committee. (see Senate website)

2. List of priorities:
   A. Report to the General Education Task Force: we will request Mary Beth Williams or some other representative of the Task Force to meet with SCoR at a future meeting of the committee this semester, preferably the December meeting. A subcommittee will be constituted.
   B. Scholarly Intellectual Property. This item was carried over from the previous year. Ron Huss discussed the history of the recent reform of the Penn State intellectual Property policies and the distinction between Instructional Intellectual property and research intellectual property. Due to possible ambiguity in some cases of scholarly intellectual property, it was requested to explore the issue. A subcommittee will be formed. Discussion on need to inform students and postdoctoral researchers on intellectual property agreements, and that this needs to be done uniformly across the University.
   C. Grant Award Contract Portfolio. VP Sharkey to present a report to the Senate: the plan is a presentation to SCoR at the October meeting, presentation to the full Senate at the December meeting.
   D. Compliance. An issue raised by IT is the use of online forums, cloud services and other services external to PSU. Are these in compliance with FERPA, HIPPA etc.? Look into compliance and provide guidance, etc. Research confidential information vs instructional information. Some question whether instructional information issues are within the scope of SCoR. Talk to Risk Management. Check on “Dual” second ID as RSA key (see Senate report from April). Tie to cyberinfrastructure governance. Issue raised that IT security and tools provided to faculty, staff and students motivate them to circumvent constraints by using third party providers. Particular issues with Hershey. A related broader issue is what is the cost in faculty and staff time and resources to meet compliance, particularly federal and state requirements and how is this impacting the research effort?
   E. Graduate Student health insurance. Implications of change in fringe and benefits on research effort. Key issue: multi-year grants submitted with old rate will be charged new rate effective 2015/16 (~ 13% -> 17%); effectively a cut in spendable amount in grant. Need to publicize this to the academic and research units. Impact is direct on current grants, should be included as part of fringe rate in future grant awards.
F. Indirect cost: informational report evaluating the flow of indirect cost allocation from central to units and within units. Solicit information from each Associate Dean for Research, or equivalent, and Financial Officer for each unit for a report on how they use their indirect costs. Talk to Central about distribution of indirect costs centrally. Subcommittee.

G. Undergraduate student engagement (cf 2a). Revisit report. The subcommittees will provide a brief overview of progress so far which will then be shared at the next Senate meeting. Informational report update will come to SCoR by early October and likely feedback on our report of last year. We will be asked to provide feedback. The idea is to think of research engagement in a more generic format, broader than ‘traditional’ picture of a student involved in research. Wait for update from task force.

3. Remarks from Sharkey: President Barron going over his six priorities with Trustees and President’s Council.
   A. There is a new Assistant VP for private industry collaborations.
   B. Research Computing Enterprise now in VP for Research with Padma in charge. Policy on faculty access to central computing resources.
   C. More use of shared high end instrumentation. Formal depreciation and replacement policy.
   D. Adm. Sullivan is new head of ARL.
   E. New head of VP strategic communication: Lawrence Lokman.
   F. Research income/expenditures will be down, report almost complete. Looks to be ~ 5% decrease.

4. Remarks from David Spencer (Grad Council): Graduate Council has not met yet. Graduate faculty reform underway. Proposal tabled pending input from academic units. See Appendix B from spring 2014 meeting.

5. Subcommittees:
   a) Beebee, Crawford, Jovanoic, Marko, Sigurdsson
   b) Jovanovic, Meyers, Nevers, Sigurdsson
   c) TBD
   d) Forest
   e) Grad Council coordination
   f) TBD, Sharma, Sigurdsson
   g) -> merge with a)

Submitted by Sigurdsson/Sharma