Minutes of the Meeting of the Penn State Faculty Senate Committee on Research  
October 21, 2014  
8:30 – 10:45 am, 103 Paterno Library

Members Present: Thomas Beebee, James Crawford, Chris Forest, John Hanold, Kathryn Hume, Ronald Huss, Andrey Krasilnikov, Frantisek Marko, Ashley McFalls, Craig Meyers, Rogerio Neves, Gregory Raab, Neil Sharkey, Amit Sharma, David Spencer

Members Absent: Robert Brooks, Igor Jovanovic, Morteza Karimzadeh, Shawn Lichvar, Steinn Sigurdsson

1. Remarks from Kevin Morooney, Vice Provost for Information Technology, and Mr. Gary Langsdale, University Risk Officer regarding Software Risk Assumption  
(Joint meeting of Research, and Libraries, Information Systems and Technology Committees)

Morooney and Langsdale introduced issues of concern related to faculty, staff and students accepting terms of service from 3rd party software vendors without University contracts, liability insurance and resources to prevent breaches of stored data. Such concerns were illustrated on examples of software "Nearpod" and "Piazza" and their vendors. Other examples of frequently used software without appropriate contracts include "Dropbox" and "Canvas".

According to University Policy AD71 and ADG07, the data is divided into three categories:

- Public data
- Internal/Controlled data
- Restricted data

The biggest concern is that users are not aware that they are sharing restricted data subject to FERPA regulations (for example student related data on quizzes on "Nearpod"). Under the terms of agreement, third party vendors are often not liable in case of a security breach. Therefore University needs to review the third party applications and make sure the data used and stored are secured and liability agreements are in place. University could incur a significant financial costs in the case of data breach.

During the discussion, many faculty pointed out that many third party applications are very useful in teaching and research and they warned against overly onerous and restrictive policy that might not be practical and users might not abide by it. These restrictions are affecting communications and are creating obstacles for work. It was mentioned that at Hershey the faculty is unable to use Box and other type of software. Faculty would like to use the third party software integrated with ANGEL; such integration has to be reviewed and negotiated.

During the discussion a need for information sharing about this topic was mentioned repeatedly. Faculty are not authorized to accept any contract (not even click-through contracts) on behalf of the University - there is a need to modify this policy. Also, there is a need to protect the information and protect the exposure of information (via the Cloud or otherwise).

In reply, it was mentioned that gaps in compliance and capabilities constantly exist and the University might be willing to enable users to share public, and perhaps some internal data, but
restricted data must be monitored and secured. University is building a list of vetted software packages that will be based on different types of data and will be published and updated in real time. It is also very important to increase awareness of the public about these issues.

It was mentioned that a copyright attorney was recently hired in the Libraries, and that Google Drive probably falls within a fair use. The Information Technology staff will be involved in training of the faculty. The challenge will be motivating faculty to attend. There need, to be a general University community discussion about Cyber Infrastructure and its governance.

Amit Sharma, the committee chair, asked that any suggestions or comments about the topics related to this presentation should be sent to him.

2. Presentation of draft Informational Report "Where we are and where we are going... The state of PSU Research" by Dr. Neil Sharkey, Vice President for Research

This very detailed presentation concentrated on the following topics:
- Data about the 2013-2014 Grants and Contracts.
- Major Initiatives of the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Overview of work and recent successes of the Institutes for Cyber science, the Social Science Research Institute, the Huck Institute of the Life Sciences, the Materials Research Institute, Institutes of Energy and the Environment, and the Applied Research Laboratory.
- Report on the work of Offices of Sponsored Programs, Technology Management, Research Protection and on the new laboratory and research spaces.

In his presentation, Dr. Sharkey also talked about invigorating entrepreneurship, technology transfer and economic development, understanding capabilities and focus areas. Other topics mentioned were Professor of Practice, undergraduate focused incentives, research focus, opportunities presented by the Fund for Innovation (funding of $20-30k requires proof of marketability).

At the conclusion of the presentation the committee members voted to unanimously support the presentation of this informational report at the Senate meeting in December with the understanding that the length of the report will be shortened to fit the timeframe that will be allocated by the Senate Council.

3. Approval of Minutes of September 9, 2014 meeting
The Minutes of the Meeting on September 9, 2014 were approved with one correction, stating that Chris Forest attended that meeting.

4. Informational report on Engaged Scholarship
The committee have reviewed the draft of the Informational report on Engaged Scholarship Background and Progress and unanimously approved its support for this report.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Frantisek Marko.