Minutes of the Meeting of the Penn State Faculty Senate Committee on Research
October 22, 2013
8:30 – 10:30 am 217 Business

Attendance: Beebee, Forest, Hanold, Hedges, Hume, Huss, Marko, Pitts, Ray, Sharkey, Sharma, Sigurdsson, Spencer, Vrana, Whalen, Yekel

Absent: Barnstable, Camara, Cole, Craighead, Demirel, Steiner, Wilson

1. Unanimously approved minutes of September 10, 2013 meeting. None opposed
2. Remarks from chair - None
3. Remarks by Neil Sharkey – discussed the publication: expenditures on organized research
   a. Income and expenditure relationship is consistent; still in good shape despite the sequestration
   b. Lot of outcry by University leadership in DC; whether anything will happen or not?
   c. PSU investment in research: 17% of the total is our investment – F&A and unrecovered F&A; at best the University is investing 25%.
   d. Nothing to indicate that industrial sponsorship has skyrocketed, but there is a lot of buzz, too early to tell. We hope that this will have a positive impact on our industrial sponsorship – they have taken note of our changes in IT transfer policy; Huss has had a lot of discussion on this issue with several stakeholders including the NSF; seems to be two models: ours and University of Minnesota; open dialogue with all, we seem to be the pioneers in this space; difference b/w us and Minnesota – pre-negotiate a favorable license back – they continue to own it but will license is back at pre-negotiated rates; we went one step further of transferring the property to the industry – which appears to be much more appealing; have a process of defining what we are transferring. Still getting into issues of risk mitigation; still working on several issues such as language and other issues but the key issue of transfer seems to be resolved; Hanold commented that we cannot go all the way to the commercial model – that we will stand behind its commercial success.
   e. Question – Is indirect included in all these expenditure? Hanold said yes, indirect is calculated at cost; Sharkey commented, long list of allocation of indirects. There has been discussion on how we allocated, our budget model, because our rates are quite low – whether we are capturing everything, seems to be a black box. This needs to be looked into, even as part of the whole budget model. Maybe next time more details on where the F&A get allocated? Hanold – our term is F&A recovery, not return. F&A per project: some agencies do not pay the entire proportion which makes them under F&A recovery rates; Vrana – investment in our research rather than indirect expenses; Hanold – our rates are relatively lower than our peer institutions, and we are not sure why… need to look at it carefully. Forest – who should we compare with?; Sharkey – we cannot
keep knocking down our F&A rates, those from non-federal sources of funding… specially when investigators are turning elsewhere… we seem to be investing more for less. Sigurdsson – should we turn down foundation money? Where is the decision made?; Sharkey – we do, on a case by case basis; after going through sponsored programs… unless there is a compelling case; Vrana – frequent problems in the college of Medicine; Hanold – we are not unusual our peers do accept flat rates from foundations; Sharkey – one way around is to give a flat fee (without breaking it into direct and indirect)… ; Ray – did a project of this sort, all inclusive; Hedges – what would be examples of projects of burdensome projects? Hanold – URS projects are examples; state projects – reporting and auditing requirements; Sharkey – average F&A was 4% across all projects.

f. Padma Raghavan did a phenomenal job of data requirements – original capacity was 0.5 megawatts, the committee suggested 3.0, substantially; 3 sources of data that suggest we need significantly more data storage capacity; next steps would require to assess how we address this gap; Forest commented – general recommendations were for what we should have in next 5 years. Modularity issue could be a good way to go – that idea was front and center; Sharkey – intention is to propose that to David Gray’s office to assess; Forest – should we have a mirror project/capacity at Hershey?; Sharkey – this needs to be discussed and brought up.

4. Updates from Graduate Council, David Spencer – tasked to come up with a set of names – faculty scholar review panel, that is done – an ongoing activity report from grad council – last meeting involved a visit from Nick Jones, getting to know meeting; very enlightening; maybe we invite him for our meeting?

5. Update on Undergraduate Research, Sharma – Shareky commented – Enhancing general education; Beebee – engaged scholarship is the key word… likelihood that engaged scholarship would be part of it; capstone experience, thematic and interdisciplinary GenEds; how GenEds could move through those 4-4.5 years; 20 minute forensic; the new GenEds is delayed for another year… supposed to roll out 2015.

6. Update on indirect cost for UPC, Ray – UPC is interested in Indirect cost rates; could this come from Sharkey’s office? Not the amount but just the percentage. Sharkey’s office will provide this information.

7. Update on the discussion on tenure-track faculty issues on campuses outside of UP, Marko – ask Dean Vasilatos-Younken to come in during the December meeting. Dean Vasilatos-Younken met with resistance at level of the department and colleges; some are ranked on their productivity, including the grad student work; so concerned that this kind of changes could create productivity challenges; handling on a case by case basis; this was an update…

8. Steinn – update… looked at current policy at PSU; no explicitly policy on neither patentable material nor courseware. A. we need a policy; B. What would it be? Lit review – ambiguity; peer institutes have a range of policy: Purdue versus USC (explicitly waives all rights); no consistent policy out there; question is whether we should go ahead and tackle it? What should be done? Huss – provided
background on previous effort… bring some clarity to PSU intellectual property, but nothing about instructional or scholarly intellectual property – so three categories were created: research IP; scholarly IP (we own no ownerships – creative works, painting, sculpture); instructional IP (create instructional materials, those are owned by faculty, PSU has the right to use it; could be commissioned works); so PSU does not own any IP created for undergraduate instructions; unless undergrad student has worked on a research project in which case they sign an IP agreement; Huss will communicate with Steinn to share what we have so far; Vrana – we record all lectures … if you leave the institution can PSU use those lectures? Steinn – Yes, in perpetuity. But not clear about paintings… grey area in software and electronic generated products; also in the instructional materials, in some cases.

9. New business – Forest: what is the role of this committee for strategic planning? Sharkey commented: he is directly engaged in research council and strategic planning… so please provide inputs to him… could be an agenda item for the next meeting? Ray agreed; Tom – this might be a good opportunity to have Provost Jones; Sharkey – Provost is very interested in a thematic approach; the URC is providing themes that are bubbling up, so that Sharkey’s office could try to make this more thematic and integrated…

10. Adjournment

Minutes submitted by Chet Ray, Committee Chair