

**COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH  
MINUTES  
November 29, 2016**

**Present:** Steve Whittaker (*chair*), Karen Bassi, Daniel Costa, Fernando Leiva, Longzhi Lin, Todd Lowe, Gustavo Vasquez, Ahmet Ali Yanik, Daniel Oliver (GSR), Scott Brandt (Vice Chancellor for Research)

**Office of Research & Graduate Division Center of Excellence's (CoE) Proposal**

At the previous meeting the Chair circulated the CoE proposal to provide seed funding to faculty and doctoral students for research development support to establish centers. Members continued to discuss the proposal to prepare comments and feedback to the CP/EVC Galloway.

VCR Brandt attended shortly to address the critique of inadequate Senate consultation, which he had fully intended to do and provide background on other critique. He noted that the plan is to delay FTE and not remove it entirely from the divisions and stressed that if the campus does not achieve the graduate target goal, the re-benching funds will be taken from the campus. The proposal is not intended only for the science divisions, there are opportunities for all division campus to bring in more funding. Any increase in external funding will assist the campus in funding graduate students and support graduate fellowship applications. Lastly, the administrative cost is high due to CP/EVC's feedback and will gladly receive the feedback to reduce overhead.

After VCR Brandt left, members continued the discussion by reviewing the drafted comments from members. The premise of the proposal is for graduate growth but accepting graduate students without a consistent funding package is problematic. Members voiced concern whether or not the proposal would deliver on its objectives. In particular, there was some discussion about whether, given agency funding models, large grants would indeed support more graduate students, as opposed to postdocs or equipment. Members would like to learn if there had been any assessment of the campus current centers, growth potential, and if the campus can accommodate the graduate students, there are concerned of overlooking current centers. The committee would like to learn whether OR had concrete ideas about strategic areas where centers were likely to be successful.

The committee was dismayed that they did not have access to nor were they requested to consult on the draft proposal, the whole process was not exemplary of shared governance. The proposal does not seem if it was written as a draft document for consultation. It would have been useful and productive to have Senate input in the development of the proposal itself. The timescale of the proposal is unrealistic, with early aspects of the proposal scheduled for this fall quarter. Members are concerned about the approval of centers when metrics are still being developed, and consultation needed, although there are specific about measurement and accountability. While acknowledging the benefits of the clear metrics for center selection and review, the committee urged that these processes could be made more light-weight.

Notwithstanding the consultative process, the committee was positive about the proposal because it did not propose 'business as usual', but sent out a clear message that large scale collaborative research is supported and that the campus is seeking large scale grants. Some evidence of the success of the approach is that the committee is already aware of several nascent collaborative initiatives springing up around campus in response to rumors about this proposal. The committee agreed with the proposal's 'bottom-up' strategic approach that will allow faculty to opportunistically form collaborations to identify promising sources of funding, rather than top down recommendations about key areas identified by the Office of Research or Graduate Studies. Office of Research in providing bespoke support for research discovery will increase the chances of funding success. Members would like to request more details about the Office of Research support, as well as faculty incentives to participate.

From a funding perspective, several committee members felt that six FTE was a large commitment, although it was agreed that viewed at the Divisional level it's a relatively modest cost (i.e. one FTE/Division). A second (contradictory) concern voiced by the committee was that certain aspects of the budget may not go far enough, especially given the overall goals of the Centers. The proposal talks about course relief or summer salary 'by exception', leading to questions about workload and incentives for participating faculty. The committee would like to see more discussion about faculty support and incentives to participate in the centers. Being involved in administration of a cross divisional Center seems like a considerable amount of work. There are also issues about center faculty and their participation in regular department activities. The proposal seemed

implicitly focused on STEM, and was relatively silent about Arts and Humanities, as well as the role of Foundations in supporting research. Members would like to know more about the joint administration by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and how this might work in practical terms. In terms of implementation and shared governance we felt that much more could have been said about the involvement of COR and Grad Council in center approvals and steady state administration.

**Adjudication of New Faculty Research Grant Applications**

Members discussed and adjudicated the new faculty research grant proposals. The committee denied funding for four proposals and gave their feedback, provided general feedback to three other proposals, partially funded two proposal, and awarded the rest of the proposals.

**FRG/SRG Call for Proposals**

The committee reviewed the FRG/SRG call letter and information about collaborative research project seed funding for the website and made minor edits.