Research Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
10/18/2012
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
SERC 3027

In attendance: Jason Scofield, Joe Benson, Dave Francko, Anthony Roberson, Amy Traylor, Andy Graettinger, Ben Harms, Marcus Perry, Ajay Agrawal, Paul Aharon, Cindy Hope, Heath Turner, Scott Montgomery, Phillip Harris, Wilson Lowrey

1. Meeting minutes from 9/20/2012 were approved (with corrections).
2. Joe Benson provided an update from President Bailey. The RAC is charged with developing a document, outlining ideas for increasing external funding at UA. There are no specific outlines or boundaries, but the committee should identify reasonable opportunities. This report should be complete by the middle of the spring semester.
3. UA Data Management Plan. Some people have tested the new DMP website, with some minor feedback provided. For instance, some of the technical acronyms should be defined (with respect to the computer hardware mentioned). Very soon an announcement will be made to the broader UA community, so that others can start using it.
4. The Faculty Senate is reviewing the IRB process on campus, as is the RAC. These efforts should be coordinated. Ed Stephenson is the representative from the faculty senate that is involved with the process, as well as Jason Scofield from the RAC. In the future, we will maintain coordination, so that we are not duplicating efforts.
5. The committee briefly reviewed our list of research-related topics.
   a. The committee is encouraged to prioritize the items in our list, and generate a ranked list. Emphasize university-level issues, versus local (department-level) issues.
   b. The committee is encouraged to consider what opportunities could potentially be pursued with financial resources of: $100K, $1M, $10M, and $100M.
   c. What can be done to improve the overall research culture? Talk with colleagues and collect feedback.

Action Items

1. **ALL committee members:** submit responses to #5 a, b, and c (above).

2. **Andy Graettinger:** Develop a draft outline of the research stimulation report (requested by Pres. Bailey)

3. **Andy Graettinger:** Coordinate with Associate Deans to announce RAC representatives to the respective colleges.
Research Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
12/20/2012
3:30 pm – 4:45 pm
SERC 3027

In attendance: Anthony Roberson, Paul Aharon, Phillip Harris, Carmen Mayer-Robin, Dave Francko, Cindy Hope, Greg Thomson, Andy Graettinger, Heath Turner, Amy Traylor, Dee Goldston, John Higginbotham, Ben Harms, Bob Taylor (sub for Ajay Agrawal), Jason Scofield

1. Meeting minutes from 11/15/2012 were approved.
2. President Bonner provided her comments about the future of research at UA. She provided some historical perspective about how we have progressed over the last decade, despite budget cuts from the state. In particular, there has been good progress in faculty salaries (especially at full and associate professor ranks). This is one aspect that helps retain talented faculty. There has also been some progress in the UA budget, so that indirect return from research contracts is reserved for research and start-up support. Grants from the UA-RGC have doubled from previous years. Approximately $150K is being used to support the Emerging Scholars program. The Science and Engineering Quad represents the long-term investment that UA has made in building the engineering and science infrastructure at UA. Also, President Bonner is committed to providing matching funding for research chairs in the future. Overall, President Bonner is interested in hearing ideas from the RAC about ways to enhance the research culture and ways to strengthen our research capabilities. Thus, as previously charged, the RAC should prepare a summary of research-related investments that would strengthen research at UA. President Bonner departed the meeting at approximately 4:20 pm.

3. The RAC then had a preliminary discussion about items that would strengthen research at UA. Many issues were related to the research culture and the escalating demands of a large undergraduate teaching requirement. Several faculty explained how the undergraduate enrollment/teaching demands have detracted from their research capacity, and how these challenges are continuing to grow.

4. The RAC is still charged with developing a list of research-stimulation investments. The RAC decided that this should be a succinct list of a few high-impact (but reasonable) investments. Ideas should be generated, and these can potentially be grouped into “buckets”. This may help the RAC identify the most critical issues.

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**Action Items**

**ALL:** Brainstorm high-impact research investments that we should request from President Bonner. Either provide these ideas electronically or be prepared to discuss at the next RAC meeting.
Minutes from Meeting of the Research Advisory Committee  
November 21, 2013  
3:30-4:45pm  
SERC 3027

In attendance: Ajay Agrawal, Andrew Graettinger, Cindy Hope, Amy Traylor, Doug Lightfoot, Samit Roy, Melondie Carter (alternate for Graham McDougall), David Francko, Jason Scofield, Dan Avery, John McGowan, Paul Aharon, Carol Duffy, Greg Thompson, Wilson Lowery, Dee Goldston

Absent: Keith Jacobi, Mike Porter, John Sikes, Michael Prado, Lou Pitschmann, Mike Spearing

- Minutes from the previous meeting were distributed and approved.
- Dr. Carl Pinkert, UA vice president for research, addressed the committee.
  - Main themes included:
    - Making strategic decisions regarding multidisciplinary research efforts.
    - Determining how best to utilize available resources.
    - PRIME report:
      - He found it helpful and is setting up meetings with the President and provost to discuss the recommendations.
    - IRB:
      - Dr. Pinkert noted that many concerns faculty have with IRB procedures are related to federal guidelines.
      - Mean time for approvals has been reduced.
      - Faculty are now able to meet with IRB.
- Dr. Pinkert then answered questions from the committee.
  - What were his thoughts about the PRIME report?
    - The report is a “nice roadmap’ for strengthening programs and research.
    - Concerns regarding resources to implement report suggestions.
      - Extramural funding is important.
      - Need to identify “thrust areas” where multiple departments can come together.
      - Need to co-ordinate efforts and highlight the research faculty and students are doing.
      - International exposure and visibility are important.
o How will UA move towards more multidisciplinary collaboration?
   ▪ Dr. Pinkert would like to meet with other universities in the state to determine how they do this.
   ▪ Need to identify strategic initiative areas and provide seed money to bring people together.

o What is his opinion on a UA research foundation?
   ▪ Research foundations can be good, but many of the justifications for a foundation can be met in other ways by the Office of research.
   ▪ In some cases, they could be helpful and the issue may need to be revisited in the future, depending on the type of research that occurs here.

o How will strategic areas be identified?
   ▪ Dr. Pinkert needs a better feel for resources before identifying strategic areas. Determination of areas will be done, in part, in conjunction with the RAC.

o How do we get administration to “buy into” research?
   ▪ Need to increase research visibility. Increase awareness and awards.

• Cindy Hope presented information on the university’s annual reports on research awards.
   o The reports can be found on the UA website:
     http://osp.ua.edu/site/researchreports.html
   o Trends are down because most funding sources have decreased availability of funds.
   o Suggestion made to pass this information out at faculty meetings to facilitate research discussions.
   o Cindy asked for feedback on OSP’s “New faculty resources” section of the website.
   o Question regarding support for new faculty, suggestion that guidance for going through grants process would be helpful. Cindy noted that classes and workshops are offered, but getting people to attend is difficult. Focus groups have noted that mentoring is a need on campus.
   o Availability of resources on campus once grants are awarded was questioned. If resources (particularly quality graduate assistants) are not available, grant money will not be awarded.
Dean Francko noted that admissions are up by 150 students. Funding is an issue. In order to recruit great students, funding for them needs to be in place. Currently, approximately 43% of graduate students receive funding.

ACTION ITEMS: Add names/contact information for members of RGC on OSP’s New Faculty Resources webpage.

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting: 12/19/2013. Meeting for 12/19/2013 cancelled.

Next meeting: 01/16/2014.

Minutes submitted by: Amy Traylor