

Minutes

COMISSION ON RESEARCH

December 13, 2017

130 Burruss Conference Room

3:30pm-5:00pm

Attendees: Jennifer Irish (Chair), Virginia Pannabecker (Vice-Chair), Theresa Mayer, Randy Heflin for Sally Morton, Stefan Duma, Alan Michaels, Sid Madhavan, Uri Kahanovitch, Robert Vogelaar, Myra Blanco, Saied Mostaghimi, Mike Sorice for Kevin McGuire, Kim Linkous for Ken Miller, Thomas Bell, Deborah Milly, Benjamin Corl, Dipankar Chakravanti, and Chris Tysor (Recorder).

Absent: Van Crowder, Andrew Neilson, Nancy Dudek, Rachel Rupnow, Kurt Zimmerman and Steve Nagle

Guests: Dennis Grove, Peggy Layne

I. Approval of the Agenda- Approved by vote

II. Announcements

- a. Approval of the minutes from November 8, 2017 – J. Irish* - Approved electronically

III. Unfinished Business

- a. Dr. Theresa Mayer – “State of Research” Part 2 – Continuation of discussion from last meeting with a recap in the beginning. One point of discussion came from the statement that for every \$1.00 in Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC), VT is reimbursed \$0.61 in F&A costs. Discussion about the way this information is presented could be confusing and taken different ways. Suggested re-writing the way this information is displayed and provided. Rate negotiations for VT with government on indirect rates are beginning now. NSF Space survey is due mid-January. 9th College at VT in 2018 coming onboard and will be Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. Theresa Mayer explained the difference in Virginia Tech’s institutes- two major types are Affiliated Thematic Research units to include VTTI, BI, VT ARC, VTCRI and Hume. These institutes are soft-money organizations and have specialized research faculty funded by grants/contracts. Interdisciplinary Academic Research Institutes include ICTAS, ISCE, Fralin and ICAT and are E&G funded, direct line item off the budget from the state. These institutes are meant to seed research within Virginia Tech to better position the university faculty to go after larger external funding. A question was brought up- how does the CoR interact with these institutes given the two different types/models?
 - a. COR Topics for FY 2017-18 - J. Irish – What are the critical path items for CoR moving forward? Increasing external funding, using space more efficiently, clarity within VT for research faculty and opportunities and other strategic investments that can make VT more competitive. Also, the CoR web link had been removed from the OVPRI website but it will be going back on in January 2018. Clarity of the Destination Areas for faculty (how does VT increase external expenditures based on the internal initiatives we are building), need clear graduate student target numbers as the current perception appears not to be focused on growth of the graduate school or graduate student body.
- b. Report of Ongoing Activities

- a. University Library Committee – G. Pannabecker – meeting with campus groups and gathering feedback.
- b. Faculty Senate – B. Vogelaar – EFAR Subcommittee was formed to start reviewing the system and the group has been encouraged to meet with Deans and gather insight/feedback.
 - i. Faculty Resolution on Faculty Inclusion & Access to Opportunities – J. Irish – Bullet list of items, actions and questions needs to go up to Theresa Mayer on this topic. Please forward any items you would like to see included to Jen Irish and Chris Tysor no later than December 20th for inclusion in this document. This will be sent up to Theresa Mayer and Legal.
- c. Committee on Research Competitiveness – no update
- d. Open Access Policy Draft announcement– G. Pannabecker - meeting with campus groups and gathering feedback.
- e. Update to Policy 13005 – A. Michaels
 - i. Faculty senate resolution -- "Faculty Inclusion and Access to Opportunities"
 - ii. At the core, we do not see 13005 overlapping significantly with the resolution; limited provisions that could be enforceable / actionable
 - iii. Given the core intent of the resolution is inclusiveness, options for Policy 13005 include (1) incorporating language for Center/Institute stakeholders to consider faculty inclusiveness during (a) chartering and (b) 5-year reviews, and (2) requiring Centers / Institutes to publish an "Opportunities to Engage" invitation to the campus community annually
 - iv. As stated in 13005, the process of growing Centers/Institutes is strictly bottom up -- should there be a provision for OVPRI / leadership to define strategic directions for new Centers/Institutes?
 - v. Does the university want to pursue UARCs?
 - 1. Possibly beyond scope of this document, but no other appropriate Policy known -- do we want to incorporate a campus pre-review of UARC initiatives?
 - 2. Does the university want to provide resources towards lobbying and obtaining a UARC? Difficult to grow organically / bottom up.
 - vi. Review intervals and independence
 - 1. Current review process states independence and time gap between Center/Institute review and Center/Institute's Director's review -- we believe more efficient to combine and maintain same stakeholders
 - vii. Wording changes and clarifications:
 - 1. Correct usage of OVPR/OVPRI throughout document
- f. Revisions to the Faculty Handbook – P. Layne –
 - i. CoR Resolution on Overload Pay for Research Faculty Who Teach – First Reading
 - ii. CoR Resolution on Research Faculty Promotions – First Reading
 - iii. CoR Resolution to Clarify Language in Faculty Handbook on Search Requirements and Removal Processes for Research Faculty Members – The First Reading for this resolution will be held at the CoR February meeting

The second reading for all three resolutions will be held concurrently, and is expected to occur at the CoR March meeting. Discussion around the fact VT

considers Post-Docs research faculty but our peer institutions do not. This could affect numbers when we are stacked against peers. Is this something VT should look into changing?

IV. New Business

- a. Revision to Policy 13020 – J. Irish -Administrative change was sent to Kim O'Rourke and we are awaiting a response.
- b. Governance 101 snapshot on Google Drive – J. Irish – a brief summary document of university governance can be found on the CoR Google Drive and includes helpful links for ease of reference.

V. Adjournment – Meeting called to adjournment at 1658

*The meeting minutes of November 8, 2017, were voted on electronically. Please remember that the absence of a response indicates a positive vote.

Please take note of the following upcoming meetings which will all take place in Burruss 130 from 3:30pm-5:00pm unless otherwise noted:

February 14, 2018

March 14, 2018

April 11, 2018

May 9, 2018

**Commission on Research
Resolution COR 2017-18 B**

**RESOLUTION TO CLARIFY FACULTY HANDBOOK LANGUAGE ON OVERLOAD
COMPENSATION FOR RESEARCH FACULTY MEMBERS TEACHING CREDIT
CLASSES**

First Reading by Commission on Research:
Shared with Commission on Faculty Affairs:
Shared with Faculty Senate:
Approved by Commission on Research:
First Reading by University Council:
Approved by University Council:

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech places a high value on the contributions to the instructional mission and student learning made by qualified members of the university community, and

WHEREAS, while the primary responsibility of research faculty is to conduct research and advance the university's research mission, there are circumstances in which the university and its instructional program benefit from the occasional participation of research faculty members with appropriate expertise, and

WHEREAS, section 6.16 of the faculty handbook does not currently provide for additional compensation for research faculty members who teach a class in excess of their normal research assignment, and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech has successfully piloted a process for compensating research faculty for teaching classes over and above their usual job responsibilities, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that section 6.16 of the faculty handbook be modified to insert the third full paragraph below:

6.16 Instructional Responsibilities for Research Faculty Members

The primary responsibility of a research faculty appointment is to conduct research and contribute to the university's research mission through the acquisition of and successful implementation of sponsored grants and contracts. Federal guidelines require truthful and auditable documentation of the faculty member's efforts on a semester basis. If the faculty member's salary is paid for by sponsored grants and contracts then there is a concomitant expectation that the faculty member's time is allocated to those projects.

While keeping the primacy of the research role in mind, there are circumstances in which the university and its instructional programs benefit from the occasional participation of research faculty members who have the appropriate credentials, expertise, and interest. The usual limitation on teaching by research faculty members is one (three-credit) course

per academic year, or no more than two courses in a two-year period. The principal investigator/supervisor, department head/chair, and dean must approve exceptions. The academic department provides instructional funding for the teaching appointment and research duties are adjusted accordingly. A three-credit course equates to .25 FTE during an academic semester; this is the usual basis for salary charges to the instructional budget.

Research faculty members may receive additional compensation to teach a class that is in excess of their normal research assignment. To qualify for additional compensation, the research faculty member may not be 100% supported from sponsored funds, must be the instructor of record, and must be assigned to teach for the entire semester. The academic department responsible for the course must fund the payment from non-sponsored funds and initiate the payment as a temporary pay action. The payment must be approved jointly by the academic and home departments and colleges and by OVPRI.

**Commission on Research
Resolution COR 2017-18 A**

**RESOLUTION TO CLARIFY FACULTY HANDBOOK LANGUAGE ON RESEARCH
FACULTY PROMOTION PROCESS**

First reading by Commission on Research:
Shared with Commission on Faculty Affairs:
Shared with Faculty Senate:
Approved by Commission on Research:
First reading by University Council:
Approved by University Council:

WHEREAS, research is part of the core mission of Virginia Tech, and

WHEREAS, research faculty make significant ongoing contributions to the university mission, and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech wants to recognize and reward the contributions of research faculty through an intentional process of review, recognition, and promotion where appropriate, consistent with the process for recognizing contributions of other types of faculty, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that section 6.2 of the Faculty Handbook be modified and a section 6.2.1 added that defines the process for research faculty promotions as indicated below.

6.2 Research Faculty Appointments

Research faculty appointments are designated to promote and expedite university research activities. The rank descriptions create several series common to current sponsored research or outreach projects. For example, employees involved in conducting research are generally appointed as research associates or research scientists (or to the “senior” titles for either of these). Those individuals who are appointed to a research traineeship for a period of up to four years following receipt of their doctorate are usually appointed as postdoctoral associates. (See [Guidelines for the Hiring of Postdoctoral Associates on the OVPRI Human Resources website.](#)) Usually, postdoctoral associates work closely with a faculty mentor in preparation for a career in academe or research; if they remain involved with research projects at Virginia Tech over a period of time, they are appointed or promoted into another appropriate rank.

The “project associate” series was designed for employees involved in sponsored activity other than traditional research, such as delivery of service or technical assistance, consultation with particular clients, preparation of manuals and materials, and so on. The project associate series is also appropriate for personnel involved primarily in the administration of large and complex sponsored programs.

~~While there is logic to the progression between and among ranks, employees may change ranks as appropriate or necessary to reflect a change in role or project. Promotions from one rank to another in order to recognize a faculty member's increased responsibilities, credentials, and/or contributions to the program over time may be recommended by the supervisor. Recommendations for promotions are done during the annual evaluation and merit adjustment process. The promotions require approval by the department head, dean, and Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. Approval by a departmental committee is also required for certain ranks (see below). A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship. (See chapter two, "Potential Conflicts Involving Spouses and Immediate Family Members.")~~

Research faculty members may be assigned a functional title in addition to their official faculty rank in order to facilitate their work or clarify their role to internal or external constituencies. (A functional title may not be an official faculty rank other than that held by the research faculty member.) In some cases, increased responsibilities may lead to a change in functional title and possibly a salary adjustment rather than a promotion in faculty rank.

Appointments to research faculty ranks, except the rank of postdoctoral associate, are indefinitely renewable. However, tenure cannot be earned in any of the research faculty ranks and service is not applicable toward the pre-tenure probationary period if the employee is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position.

The source of funds is not the determining factor as to whether a position carries a research faculty rank, but rather the nature and purpose of the assignment. Thus, a research faculty member may be funded by sponsored projects, overhead, state dollars, or other sources. Policies related to research faculty apply, regardless of the source of funding.

Research faculty may participate in activities outside of their direct source of funding, such as providing significant contributions to the conceptualization or writing of new proposals, or teaching; however, support for any time or effort spent on activities outside of their sponsored research must come from non-sponsored research funds. Special attention should be given in the development of position descriptions where funding is limited to only sponsored funding. (See chapter six, "Effort Certification Compliance Issues for Research Faculty Members," and chapter ten, "Effort Certification and Salary Charges to Sponsored Grants and Contracts.")

Original appointments and reappointments, including rank, salary, and other conditions, require the approval of the department head, dean (or next level administrator), and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation *before* an offer is extended. Requests for principal investigator status may be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. Such requests require the approval of the department head, dean, and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation.

6.2.1 Research Faculty Promotions

While there is logic to the progression between and among ranks, employees may change ranks as appropriate or necessary to reflect a change in role or project. Promotions from one rank to another in order to recognize a faculty member's increased responsibilities, credentials, and/or contributions to the program over time may be recommended by the supervisor.

~~Recommendations for promotions are done during the annual evaluation and merit adjustment process~~ within the non-professorial ranks (such as project associates, research associates, and research scientist etc.) may be requested at any time during the year in recognition of significant increases in responsibilities, credentials or contributions. The promotions require approval by the department head, dean, and Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. ~~Approval by a departmental committee is also required for certain ranks (see below).~~ A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship. (See chapter two, "Potential Conflicts Involving Spouses and Immediate Family Members.") Following approval of the promotion request, a promotion letter signed by the department head should be presented to the employee.

Promotion recommendation into and within the research professorial faculty ranks (research assistant professor, research associate professor and research professor) should align with the annual timeline published by the university. Faculty members being considered for promotion have their dossiers reviewed by: (1) a departmental committee and the head or chair; (2) a college committee and the dean; and (3) the vice president for research and innovation. A parallel process for review, approved in advance by the executive vice president and provost and the vice president for research and innovation, is required for promotion of a member of the research professor series whose primary appointment is not in an academic department. Following approval of the promotion request, a promotion letter signed by the vice president of research and innovation should be presented to the employee.