

COMMISSION ON RESEARCH

March 11, 2009
325 Burruss Hall
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: L. Coble, D. Cook, S. K. De Datta, D. Dean, R. Grange, R. Hall, B. Huckle, T. Inzana, D. Jones, R. Siegle, R. Veilleux, B. Vogelaar, P. Young,

Members Absent: R. Benson, N. Clemency, C. Dawkins, T. Fox, T. Herdman, R. Kapania, S. Martin, K. Miller, P. Zellner

Invited Guests: C. Montgomery, S. Muse, T. Schroeder

- 1. Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda was offered by L. Coble and seconded by B. Vogelaar and carried.
- 2. Approval of the minutes for CoR meeting February 11, 2009:** A motion to approve the minutes was offered by T. Inzana and seconded by R. Veilleux and carried.

3. Fralin Life Sciences Institute Charter:

Institute Director Dennis Dean gave the Commission a presentation on the status of the Fralin Life Sciences Institute charter. Dr. Dean presented a brief history on his new position, the background on his philosophy and vision for the institute, and asked the Commission members for recommendations for the charter. D. Dean explained that the charter was a blueprint of what he is going to do.

D. Dean expressed his vision that the Institute should work in cooperation with other departments, colleges, centers, and institutes to facilitate faculty recruitment and development in Life Sciences for the University. D. Dean feels that often times the small departments that comprise the Life Sciences do not have the resources to attract the best graduate students. He would like to partner with departments, colleges and other institutes to see where investments can be made collaboratively to help individuals and groups work together.

D. Dean explained that the institute is also involved in outreach programs through undergraduate research. The Fralin Center reaches about 10,000 students per year using the “Biotech in a Box” program that the Institute supports. Many students reportedly state that a major reason they were drawn to VT was the Fralin-sponsored outreach they experienced in high school.

With regard to budgetary priorities, D. Dean feels that supporting new faculty recruitment, infrastructure enhancements, and retention of our leading faculty represent the best investments for the Institute.

B. Vogelaar noted that he would like to see the philosophy as explained by D. Dean included in the charter under goals or core values. B. Vogelaar also recommended that feedback from the Institute’s constituencies become part of the evaluation

process. B. Huckle thought that the review process should be more explicitly defined including the continuation or discontinuation measurements.

D. Dean stated that he felt that the charter was fairly explicit in detailing the review process and that the measures as written in the charter are at least semi-quantifiable, including scholarly output. D. Dean stated that he would address these concerns in another document to circulate to the Commission for their vote. He also stated that CoR members could email him with other additional items he needs to address.

4. Impacts of Loss of Library Resources on Research:

B. Huckle asked the CoR for specific needs of the represented colleges for Library Resources. B. Vogelaar thought that planning for costs of periodicals, including the issue of paper versus electronic subscriptions, should consider not just perennial increases but also the changing research resources needed by faculty. T. Inzana suggested perhaps that we could eliminate all paper copies of journals since they are available electronically. P. Young added that there is an ongoing transition in journals and book publication toward less paper, more electronic editions, and that the Library is currently following this trend. Electronic periodical subscriptions remain very expensive, however.

R. Siegle added that the Humanities have suffered greatly already from the lack of library resources and that this is not a trivial problem but an on-going disaster. He stated that wholesale shifting from print to electronic is not possible for the Humanities.

B. Huckle requested approval to draft a letter from the Commission to President Steger and Mark McNamee that would state the CoR's concerns about Library Resources. B. Huckle stated that he would email the letter to Commission members for approval before submitting. All members approved his request.

5. Review of Policy on Salary Incentive Plan for Faculty:

T. Inzana presented to the CoR a document outlining the proposed faculty Research Incentive Plan, an initiative brought forth by the Provost. T. Inzana explained that this proposed policy has gone through a number of revisions and had existed in various forms for a number of years. The policy has already been presented to the Deans and Department Heads, and an earlier version was presented to the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

T. Inzana explained that there are a number of reasons for proposing this Plan: to provide a salary bonus; to encourage and reward faculty who are successful in obtaining grants and contracts; and to create an incentive for increasing submission of grant applications and contract proposals. T. Inzana added that it also could be an effective recruiting and retention tool for faculty, providing a means of supplementing salary during lean years such as these.

Faculty eligible to participate would be PIs and Co-PIs on E & G funds who have greater than 10% of their base salary charged to one or more grants or contracts that provide the maximum indirect rate. Faculty members in academic-year appointments

are eligible once summer salaries have been covered as in current practice. T. Inzana noted that the 10% threshold spares the salary savings allocation to departments; the faculty bonus tops out at 25% percent of salary. For calendar year faculty, eligibility begins after sponsored coverage of 22% of salary (equivalent to 2 months of summer salary) and tops out at 37%, thus encompassing the same range available to A/Y faculty. The Department Head has final approval in regard to participation and when the grant is eligible.

T. Inzana stated that research administrators at other universities with similar programs feel that it enhanced faculty morale. D. Jones stated that the lack of such a system is why some faculty have left VT and that top 30 universities typically have such policies along with endowed chairs. B. Vogelaar stated that in some fields, salaries on grants are not allowed other than summer salaries. R. Grange suggested that a tax analysis be made on the difference between getting paid on a monthly basis versus a lump sum. R. Veilleux stated that it would be better if distributed over two years or 'after the fact'; that having it on a fiscal year basis rather than a calendar year basis would work better.

T. Inzana plans to present the policy to the Commission on Faculty Affairs during their next meeting. He would like to present this to the Board of Visitors during their June meeting.

6. Selection of CoR Chair 2009-2010:

B. Huckle shared with the CoR that it is not certain when the Commission chair selection actually needs to be done and that he will keep them posted on that info.

7. Meeting adjournment: A motion to adjourn the meeting was offered by D. Jones and seconded by L. Coble and carried at 5:30pm.