

## **COMMISSION ON RESEARCH**

November 9, 2011

325 Burruss Hall

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Randy Wynne (Chair), Michael Akers, Lay Nam Chang, Kevin Davy, Dennis Dean, Jesus de la Garza, Guru Ghosh, Serkan Gugercin, William Huckle, Delbert Jones, Bradley Martens, Jeff Moore, Heather Moorefield-Lang, Anita Puckett, Wornie Reed, Chris Zobel and Tammy Bose (Recording Secretary).

**Absent:** Terry Herdman, William Knocke, Annie Pearce, Arnab Roy, and Robert Walters.

**Guests:** Rodd Hall (for R. Walters), Pat Hyer, Frances Keene, Paul Knox, Gary Long, Ken Miller, Sandra Muse, Elizabeth Tranter, and Tyler Walters.

**I. Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda as presented was offered, seconded and was carried.

### **II. Announcements**

**a. Approval and Posting of the minutes of October 12, 2011:** R. Wynne reported that the minutes from the last meeting on October 12, 2011 were approved by the membership electronically and are available on the Commission Scholar site.

**b. Different Meeting Site for December Meeting of CoR:** R. Wynne noted that the next meeting of the Commission will be in the President's Board Room, 210 Burruss Hall, on December 14, 2011.

### **III. Unfinished Business:**

#### **a. Report of Ongoing Activities**

- i. Library Committee:** No report.
- ii. Centers and Institutes Committee:** No report.
- iii. Human Resource Committee:** No report.
- iv. Research Administration Committee:** No report.

**b. Impact of Proposed MMTF Location on Research in Derring:** R. Wynne reported that Dr. Knocke, representing the Commission, reported its concerns to the University Council regarding the Multi-Modal Transit Facility (MMTF) and its impact of bus exhaust on Derring Hall and proximate science research buildings. A motion had been presented at the last Commission meeting to have the Commission continue to follow the issue and work closely with the Faculty Senate and other appropriate commissions. A new motion was made to cede the leadership on addressing this issue within the university's governance process to the Commission on University Support. The motion was seconded and carried. A. Puckett reported that L. N. Chang has formed a five-person sub-committee separate from the Commission to monitor this issue. She also reported that the Faculty Senate informed her that the progression of the MMTF project has been placed on hold for a one-year period. See attached letter titled "Expression of Concern from the Commission on Research Regarding the impact of the Proposed Multi-Modal Transport Facility (MMTF) on College of Science Research Facilities."

**c. University's Strategic Plan Update:** P. Knox and F. Keene, of the Office of Long Range Planning, gave a short review on the current status of the long-range planning process. The Presidential Task Force's goal is to determine an effective plan for the future success of Virginia Tech for the years 2012-2018. Dr. Knox mentioned the web site [www.longrangeplan.vt.edu](http://www.longrangeplan.vt.edu) and encouraged the Virginia Tech community to access the web site, review the posted report and

working papers, and provide constructive criticism and comments regarding the current drafts. Relevant documents may also be posted on this web site by individuals.

Regarding the research portion of the plan, P. Knox stated that the previous strategic plan listed four emphasis areas under the discovery (research) domain. These were: a) energy, materials and environment, b) health food and nutrition; c) social and individual transformation; and d) innovative technologies and complex systems. Since then there has been significant added emphasis and capacity in the areas of health sciences. Transportation has also emerged as an even bigger part of the research portfolio, which he said accounted for about one in every six research dollars. A determination will need to be made by the writing team about whether these two areas are listed along with the current four areas of emphasis or continue to be integrated within those four areas.

Additional areas of emphasis for the current strategic plan include graduate and undergraduate education, the arts, creating a trimester model to support the year-round use of VT, and other areas that need to be further defined.

The current thinking is that there will be a goal of increasing the number of doctoral students by 1,000 during the planning period. These would almost all need to be funded by external research, so would probably be in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering, math, and health (STEM-H).

The draft of the plan will be refined over the Winter break, and then reviewed for a period of several weeks by the Presidential Task Force, the Academic Advisory Council, the Academic Council, and other key groups. The final report will be presented to the Board of Visitors in March 2012.

There was a question raised regarding ways to foster more synergy and collaboration between research institutes and academic departments. D. Dean said that Dr. Walters is planning a series of face-to-face meetings between academic leaders and institute directors to air their concerns and try to find ways to resolve some of the issues.

**d. COI Task Force, Proposed Modifications to Policy 13010:** Elizabeth Tranter and Pat Hyer, co-chairs of the Task Force on Consulting and Conflict of Interest, gave a brief update on the current activities of the Task Force. The presentation focused on proposed modifications to Policy 13010 and the current status of the revisions to the policy. The handout detailing the proposed revisions and their references to the Faculty Handbook and other related existing policies was reviewed, noting the cross referencing between the proposed revisions, existing policies, and the Faculty Handbook.

Ms. Tranter noted that there are two broad groups on which to apply the PHS guidelines: investigators on sponsored projects and non-investigators on sponsored projects. The Task Force will further refine how broadly to apply the PHS guidelines to these two groups.

The new policies will broaden the responsibility for conflict of interest (COI) issues to include the university's COI designee. In the past, the investigator was responsible for the disclosure of COI, but with the advent of the new policies the university will now carry much of the burden to ensure consistent application of policies, manage disclosures and to create management plans for identified conflicts of interest. The new NIH regulations will require that all investigators, students and consultants on grants receive training and comply with COI regulations. PHS policies will impact the level of detail of disclosure. These regulations will apply regardless of the sponsor.

Dr. Hyer noted that *any* equity interest in a non-publicly traded company must be reported as a potential COI. Every single investigator will have to file a disclosure whether or not a potential

COI exists. Investigators will have to be trained on COI standards and policies prior to receiving awards.

The Task Force is reviewing the COI policies of other major institutions, such as policies regarding employee-owned businesses, cases in which the investigator's own doctoral student works for his or her consulting company, and instances where professors have their own child in their class as a student. Some of these situations are prohibited at other institutions due to the high risk of COI. The Task Force, along with community input, will work towards determining to what extent the Virginia Tech COI policies should protect the students, faculty, and the university.

The Commission on Research will serve as the host commission for the COI policy revisions. Ms. Tranter requested that Commission members review the proposed policy changes in detail to prepare questions and comments for a more in-depth discussion at the next Commission meeting. A first reading of the policy will be presented to the Commission at the December meeting. The Task Force goal is to have the policy ready for a vote by February, present it to University Council, and allow time to be in compliance with PHS policies by August. See attached handouts "Summary of Proposed Changes to Policy 13010," Policy 13010 Rev.:5, and Virginia Tech Form 13010 Request to Engage in External Activity and Disclosure of Conflict of Interest.

#### **IV. New Business:**

**a. Presentation on the University Library:** Tyler Walters, the new dean of university libraries, gave a presentation on the mission and goals of his organization. The overall goals of the libraries are the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge, which coincides with the mission of Virginia Tech. There has been a huge transition toward digital storage of information and research results, raising new issues as to the best way to preserve and retrieve the publications and data of these unique works. This applies to journal articles, book materials, research data and articles, audio and video intellectual output, all of which exist in various forms on campus. The library has recently hired a digital repository librarian to produce data management plans and to help organize, preserve, and promote the use of its large repository of information in its various forms.

**V. Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.