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Minutes
COMMISSION ON RESEARCH
3:30pm-5:00pm | October 13, 2022
130 Burruss Hall and Zoom

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Present: Alexander Leonessa (presiding), Kayla Alward, Leanna Blevins, Cynthia Devers, Joshae Gordon, Rob Gourdie, Randy Heflin, Don Hempson, Ben Knapp, Rajnish Kumar, Leslie LaConte, Kathy Lu, Kevin McGuire, Luke Neurauter, Eric Newton, Lydia Patton, Jonathan Petters, Kevin Pitts, Alexandra Poetter, Chloe Robertson, Ryan Stewart, Elizabeth White

Absent with Notice: Sheryl Ball, Roseanne Foti, Chris Headley, Steve Rideout, Dan Sui, Lijuan Yuan

Absent: Ron Gibbons

Guests: Vince Baranauskas, Raj Bhagavathula, Isabel Bradburn, Lori Buchanon, Kim Linkous, Ken McCrery

Research and Innovation support: Kim Borkowski, Laurel Miner

Alex Leonessa called the meeting to order at 3:31pm. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of September 2022

Alex Leonessa noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be accessed on the [Commission on Research drive](#).

3. Presentation(s)

Rajaram Bhagavathula, Research Scientist at Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, and Isabel Bradburn, Research Director for the Child Development Center for Learning and Research, gave a presentation on the Status of Governance Representation of Research Faculty & Committee Charge ([presentation attached](#), [proposal attached](#)). Dr. Bhagavathula reminded the Commission about the results of the Committee's discussions in the last academic year. Research faculty without appointments in academic colleges and departments are not represented on Faculty Senate. The committee suggests that research faculty outside of academic colleges be represented in two seats on the Faculty Senate. The election would be conducted by the Office of Research and Innovation in the same manner as the current election for research faculty representatives on the Commission on Research. Further study is needed

to understand whether a Research Faculty Association is feasible; if it is, that body would take on responsibility for elections in the future. The committee feels that it is largely ready to move on to proposing a resolution; Alex Poetter will convene the committee to draft the resolution.

Ken McCrery, Chief of Staff for Division of Information Technology, gave an Update on Software Procurement (attached). As part of the IT Transformation Project, a pilot is underway (began August 1, 2022 and ending December 31, 2022) for simplifying the process for procuring low-risk software. Software must meet thresholds for cost, data risk, risk impact, and vendor to be categorized as low-risk. Department Heads may approve low-risk software, and it is registered through IT PALS. This process has accommodated about 75% of all software procurement in process through the pilot period, accounting for 183 procurements closed complete, 22 closed incomplete, seven closed skipped and nine pending. In addition, both the Division of IT and university legal have been authorized to hire positions to assist with software procurement, which may help further accelerate the process.

Jonathan Petters, Assistant Director of Data Management and Curation Services, sought interest from other commission members to replace him as CoR Representative on the Library Committee.

Randy Heflin, Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation, presented on PI Eligibility Recommendations (attached). Dr. Heflin led a working group to review Virginia Tech's procedures for approving principal investigator (PI) status for ranks that are not automatically approved for that status. The suggested modifications to procedure seek to add flexibility and career advancement for individuals who wish to be principal investigators, while also ensuring they are able to meet sponsor expectations and legal and regulatory requirements. The suggested changes include the ability to provide extended approvals for exceptions, expanded faculty appointments that may have exceptions, and expanded training for PIs. Dr. Heflin is soliciting further feedback from other university groups before the recommended changes to procedure are presented to Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation Dan Sui.

4. **Other Items**

Alex Leonessa gave an overview of CoR Goals / Work Plan. At the next meeting, Laurel Miner will provide an update from the working group on the Policies on Centers (13005 and 3020); the research faculty representation committee will continue to draft a resolution; and the Commission will determine next steps on the Conflict of Commitment policies.

5. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:50pm.