

Minutes
COMMISSION ON RESEARCH
3:30 – 5:00 pm | November 9, 2023
Zoom

Present: Carla Finkelstein (presiding), Thomas Archibald, Ella Atkins, Sheryl Ball, Leanna Blevins, Scott Case, Cynthia Devers, Ronald Gibbons, William Headley, Randy Heflin, Ben Knapp, Elizabeth McLain, Rolf Mueller, Eric Newton, Corinne Noirot, Yuchin Pan, Jonathan Petters, Kevin Pitts, Alexandra Poetter, Quinn Thomas, Elizabeth White, Lijuan Yuan

Absent with Notice: Barry Miller, Luke Neurauter, Ryan Stewart, Dan Sui

Absent: Didar Islam, Daniel Pauly, Amanda Wolfe

Guests: Barbara DeCausey, Dee Harris, Joseph Mills, Kim O'Rourke, Dane Skow

Research and Innovation support: Kim Borkowski, Laurel Miner

Carla Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Approval of and posting of minutes of October 12, 2023

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

3. Old Business

COR Resolution 2023-24A

Resolution to Revise Policy 13040: Virginia Tech Human Subjects Research Policy

Carla Finkelstein, presented the resolution for second reading ([attached](#)). A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed.

COR Resolution 2023-24B

Resolution to Revise Policies 13005 and 3020 on Center and Institute Establishment, Oversight, and Governance and Financial and Administrative Procedures

Laurel Miner, Assistant Vice President for Research and Innovation and Chief of Staff, presented the resolution for second reading ([attached](#)). She described the changes made to the policy since first reading in response to comments from the Commission, other Commissions, and Faculty Senate:

- The criteria for a center has been changed to say that it fulfills a need that cannot be *adequately addressed* through organizational units, rather that cannot *be met* by them.
- A process was added for allowing some organizations to continue using the names “center” or “institute”, even if they are not established as such through the policy.
- The process for establishing a new sponsored center has been simplified.

- The expectations for stakeholder committees for college and department-level centers has been clarified.
- The frequency of required meetings for stakeholder committees has been decreased.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed.

4. Presentations

Kim O'Rourke, Vice President for Policy and Governance and Secretary to the Board of Visitors, presented Shared Governance Discussion Questions, an assessment tool being distributed to Senates, Commissions, the Department Head Council, and Council of College Deans, for feedback on the new governance system since its implementation two years ([attached](#)). CoR members provided feedback in the discussion, including:

- The potential to add representation of the Division of Information Technology to the CoR;
- The potential to improve clarity on the relationship between the CoR and Faculty Senate, especially on commission priorities and feedback on policies;
- Challenges with clarity and alignment on reading scheduling and timing.

Any additional comments or feedback from individuals are welcome and will be sent to Kim O'Rourke, who will include all responses in their entirety to the University Council Cabinet, which will consider all feedback and determine next steps.

Jonathan Petters, Associate Director, Data Management & Curation Services, University Libraries, presented the idea of creating a partnership between CoR and central IT regarding its support for VT research ([attached](#)). Dane Skow, Associate Vice President for Research Computing, agreed that having CoR as a partner would be helpful as they work toward projects related to research data storage - including two near term projects, VT SURE and VT Archive. Skow also noted that he and Randy Heflin, Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation, are co-chairs of the Committee on Research Technology, which has a working group tasked to create a data map across the university to identify different types of data, how they relate to each other, and to create a framework to start addressing needs. Members discussed the importance of being able to collaborate outside the university; share costs of storage for research; and the critical importance of collaborative, flexible storage to competitiveness in new fields like AI. The group agreed that further engagement between the Division of IT with the Commission would be beneficial, especially at the intersection of research and IT.

5. Other Items

Laurel Miner, Assistant Vice President for Research and Innovation and Chief of Staff, gave an update on research faculty in governance. As Faculty Senate reviews its new role in shared governance, they are considering the potential conflicts of interest related to having supervisors and supervisees represented or serving on the Senate, and what that may mean for postdocs and all other categories of research faculty across the university.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 pm.