Minutes
COMMISSION ON RESEARCH
10 December 2020
Virtual
3:30pm-5:00pm

CoR Documents available to CoR members in Team Drive: CoR FY20

Attendance (quorum met): Jeff Alwang, Raj Bhagavathula, Harry Dorn, Jeff Hickman, Matt Holt, Ran Jin, Leslie LaConte, Kevin McGuire, Cristina Miliano, Lydia Patton, Jonathan Petters, John Phillips, Robin Queen, Karen Roberto, Daniel Sui, Stephanie Trout, Pam VandeVord (for Julie Ross), Lijuan Yuan, Elizabeth Grant

OVPRI: Laurel Miner, Kim Borkowski

Members Absent: Hypatia Alexandria, Don Hempson, Tasia Persson, Emily Warwick,

Guests: Lauren Magruder (Office of Sponsored Programs), April Myers (Office of VP for Policy & Governance,) Ellen Plummer (Faculty Affairs), Mary Potter (Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance)

I.   [3:30] Approval of the Agenda

II.   Approval of November 2020 Minutes - Approved electronically

III.   Introductions and Announcements

   A.   Policy 13000 – University Council First Reading. No questions were raised at the first reading, the University Council was supportive of the effort.
      1.   Resolution to Establish a Scholarly Articles Open Access Policy

IV.   [3:45 pm] First Reading – Resolution to Increase University Institute Representation in the COR – Karen Roberto.
   A.   Resolution to Increase University Institute Representation in the Commission on Research and Resolution FAQs.
   B.   Discussion. Working group developed a resolution to take into consideration the faculty members of the research institutes at VT, as many of them have no means of representation on this commission. It seemed especially important to broaden our scope of membership, since the commissions goal is to focus on and study the policies and procedures related to research. Two types of university-level institutes: thematic (VTTI & FBRI) and investment (ICTAS, ISCE, ICAT, FLSI) fall under Policy 13005. Thematic institutes hire their own faculty, sometimes in conjunction with departments. Investment institutes are

largely comprised of faculty that are already in home departments and colleges spread out across university. Because the institutes contribute a substantial fraction of external research dollars for the university and they lack representation on this commission, we put forth a process adding membership. The proposal is that each thematic institute would have a representative and the investment institutes would have one representative to collectively represent that group. This would increase the CoR membership by three or four members.

  C. Questions from CoR Members.

      1. Question: Has there been an informal way that an institute director has been represented CoR?
Answer: Some institute directors have served, but it has been as representative of research-related interdisciplinary programs, groups, or centers appointed by the President This would be specific to the faculty level. There have been some overlaps with research faculty appointments.

      2. Question: What is the rationale for why these are appointed by Institute Directors or collectively by the group of institute directors vs. election. Are the people representing the institute or the faculty who do not have representation on the commission?
Answer: They would be representing the faculty within their particular institute. We wrote the language to allow Institute Directors to guide the process of how they are chosen, if by nomination process or otherwise; which is in line with the colleges.

      3. Question: (a) Are there any constraints with the representation structure given that faculty can be both members of an institute and a department? (b) Can you clarify the motivation to have only one representative for investment institutes?
Answer: (a) Do not see it as a constraint. If they were elected or nominated by their institute, then that is who they are representing. (b) Since investment institutes do not have faculty and collectively share a similar mission of raising the research profile of the university. Investment institute directors felt that they could collectively identify or call for elections for one individual that would be a research faculty.

V. [4:00 pm] VPRI Update – Dan Sui

  A. Board of Visitors presentation provided an update on the current state of the university research enterprise. Despite multiple challenges of COVID, the VT research enterprise is strong with an increase in key areas of extramural support, number of proposal submissions, and research award and grants received. As reflected in the recent message from President Sands, a great team effort accomplished this level of research productivity, measured by external grants and highly impactful publications by our researchers in various highly-cited and prestigious outlets. Dr. Sui thanked the commission for all of the hard work we have done this year.

  B. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has officially published the research data framework. An important federal guideline on how research data should be organized and archived. In the coming semester, we may organize a webinar or workshop later in the spring involving the PI community to have a deep dive on this federal research data framework. This is an important

topic within the data landscape and conversations have been started with the Privacy and Research Data Protection Program within the Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance on this topic to lead efforts in the spring. The larger context is related to reproducibility and replicability in scientific research across all campus. Mary Potter has seen a lot of interest and engagement with researchers over the past year as they work to educate researchers, noting that the library has been a wonderful partner in this process.

1. Comment: This commission charged a committee on public access to research data a couple of years ago; so we have talked about these things and am glad that you are interested in this. There is a 2nd reading of this policy in February 2021.

C. Certification of PI efforts. Would like to have the current paper process to be moved to an electronic process. Working group that includes OSP and controller's office has presented three options for review. Will meet with the working group again to make a decision with a timeline to implement a web-based process sometime during the spring.

D. National Security Institute Progress. The Provost has charged Dr. Sui to review the charter and to address four specific issues. Working groups have been organized to address these issues with a deadline to report back to the Provost by mid-January. Once this is complete, Virginia Tech will have a one-stop shop for national security needs.

1. Comment: There should be a policy statement upfront that states that NSI is a-political and that it would not be influenced by Washington, D.C., in case there is any issues that the institute might face.
   Response: VT is public institution and funded by tax dollars and are bi-partisan, we will serve the national and public interest. This suggestion will be brought to the committee and that the charter reflects this idea.

E. Recurring themes for OVPRI support. Held many meetings over the past 6 weeks and several recurring themes have emerged.

1. OVPRI needs to play more of a leadership role and make a concerted effort to increase the success rate and support large center-based proposals. Discussions and plans have already taken shape and starting in the new year, we will be implementing a new program to better support this initiative. If you look at our funding portfolio, we are doing great with individual researchers, but in terms of larger center-type proposals, we can do more based on our reputation and strengths. For example, there is growing interest in quantum information science and computing initiative. Our Link License and Launch group has worked with potential industry sponsors related to this.

2. Increase biomedical and health-related funding portfolio. There are two big ideas under discussion. (1) Under the general umbrella of One Health (link study of animal health with human health), with Veterinary Medicine and FBRI. (2) Whole Health (link study of human health – physiological, mental, spiritual, and develop a scheme for self-care, community care, and professional care). Dr. Sui is interested in whole health and linking biomedical researchers in the traditional STEM field, (in Blacksburg and Roanoke) to have stronger relationship with social sciences and humanities. This would bring on several exciting projects.

VI.   [4:15 pm] OSP Update on PI Verification - Lauren Magruder
   A. Presentation on [Summit PI Verification](#)
   B. An overview of the new process included: PI Verification Approval, Verification View, Process, Pre-Award Associate Bypass, Cancelation Process, Emails, Proposal Editor Labels & Summary View Icons
   C. PI Verification was implemented in Summit to meet compliance issues and to ensure that the PI has reviewed and confirmed that all of the information is correct. PI verification will initiate when the proposal is submitted. This new process will be effective on December 15. Any proposals after that will incorporate the PI verification process. Information has been presented to the Associate Deans for Research, posted to VT news twice, and emailed to VT SPAa group, and pre-award has added a banner in Summit and a notice is included on the bottom of emails.
   D. PI Verification VT Notice: https://vtnews.vt.edu/notices/research-summit-principal-investigator-verification.html

VII.   [4:30 pm] ICTAS 5 Year Review Report – Robin Queen
   A. Presentation on the [ICTAS 5 Year Review](#) and discussion.
      1. Overview included timeline and current status, overall findings and key recommendations from the [ICTAS Review Report](#).
   B. Questions from CoR Members
      1. Question: Noted that some of the recommendations are framed in active voice and others were not. If no one is attached to the recommendation, it is less likely that the recommendation will be acted on.
         Answer: The committee intended to put recommendations forward and not direct ICTAS. Policy says that the administrator has 45 days to review, consider the recommendations. It will be a conversation between the administrator, OVPRI and the institute director and how the recommendations will be implemented.
      2. Question: In all reviews of institute directors and institutes this year, communication seems to be a recurring theme. There may be a need for clear university-wide centralized communication about institutes and their activities. This is not specific to the ICTAS report.
         Answer: Seems there is a space to talk about communication strategy and centralized communication.
      3. Questions: In early 2010-13 ICTAS had a faculty advisory board and there was better communication at that time. Is there some other mechanism that helps provide that information outwards and beyond?
         Answer: There is a stakeholder's group, but it is all administrative, not faculty.
      4. Question: Is the Nanoscale laboratory equipment over 10 years old and needs to be updated?
         Answer: It was an overall conclusion that better servicing was needed for equipment.

B. Voting. Zoom poll was launched for voting on each of the recommendations (1-15). CoR members voted to approve all recommendations.

*Please take note of the 2020-2021 meetings listed below which will all take place virtually, from 3:30-5:00 pm, on the **2nd Thursday of each month** (with a few exceptions to accommodate academic year events or breaks)

2021
- No January Meeting
- February 11
- March 11
- April 8
- May 6