

Minutes

**COMMISSION ON RESEARCH**

April 11, 2018

130 Burruss Conference Room

3:30pm-4:30pm

Attendees: Jennifer Irish (Chair), Virginia Pannabecker (Vice-Chair), Sally Morton, Stefan Duma, Sid Madhavan, Andrew, Nielson, Robert Vogelaar, Myra Blanco, Kevin McGuire, Ken Miller, Kurt Zimmerman, Nancy Dudek, Uri Kahanovitch, Steve Nagle, Deborah Milly, Rachael Rupnow, Benjamin Corl, and Chris Tysor (Recorder).

Absent: Van Crowder, Dipankar Chakravarti, Saied Mostaghimi, Nathan King, Alan Michaels and Thomas Bell

Guests: Ben Knapp, Bill Knocke, Peggy Layne, Erin McCann, Patty Becksted, Agnes Porter

I. Approval of the Agenda- Approved by vote with modification that there will not be any updates today by the University Library Committee.

II. Announcements

- a. A brief summary of the special CoR session held April 4, 2018 was provided by J. Irish. The full minutes from that session are appended to these minutes.

III. Unfinished Business

- a. Upcoming Elections- Call for nominations for Vice Chair for the 2018-2019 year. The Vice Chair term is 2 years with the first year serving as Vice Chair and second year serving as Chair. Please consider nominating or self-nominating. As of today, there is one nominee (Alan Michaels) and an electronic vote will be held prior to the next CoR meeting to vote in a new Vice Chair for the 2018-2019 year.
- b. Report of Ongoing Activities
  - a. Committee on Research Competitiveness – S. Duma stated the committee is still working to identify methods for Virginia Tech to increase large scale federal funding opportunities (NSF, NIH) and industry funding. S. Duma made a visit to Brown University who is 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation for NIH funding. They have a similar distributed model to Virginia Tech with 5 research institutes and Brown brought in \$81M in NIH funding in 2017. Virginia Tech will be scheduling focus groups in the summer and fall to further address this issue.
  - b. University Library Committee- ~~V. Pannabecker~~ no update
  - c. Faculty Senate – B. Vogelaar – There have been two senate meetings since the last CoR meeting. The biggest topics of discussion were metrics, the PIBB model, Strategic Plan presentation and Promotion and Tenure. Faculty Senate had a briefing by the Strategic Planning Committee and was slightly concerned that no input was being solicited from faculty who are not in a group or on a committee targeted by the Strategic Planning Committee.
  - d. Update to Policy 13005 – no update

- e. Resolutions on revisions to the faculty handbook had their first reading at the University Council meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. There was a comment on the third resolution regarding the “removal for cause” language. Jack Finney addressed this point and said this language is across the entire faculty handbook and does need to be addressed; President Sands suggested waiting until next semester when all commissions will be involved in addressing this language. This point should not hold up the resolution at this time. The second reading at University Council is scheduled for April 16th.
- f. Open Access Policy Draft announcement– no update

#### IV. New Business

- a. Call for topics and/or speakers for next year- if you have any ideas for topics and/or speakers you think we should invite to next year’s meetings, please e-mail your ideas to J. Irish, V. Pannabecker and cc C. Tysor.
  - a. University Strategic Plan briefing- Erin McCann, Director of Strategic Planning, Patty Becksted, Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Agnes Porter, Admin for Strategic Planning Office were in attendance. The strategic planning committee has been working this spring on a strategic planning process to guide the direction of the institution and support Beyond Boundaries. An initial draft has been developed and will be shared with you. Dr. Pratt-Clarke was unable to make it to the meeting today, but she does welcome a representative from the Commission on Research to join the Research Subcommittee. Just provide her the name of the person you want to be the rep. Erin went over the strategic planning committee members and structure to include the four people in the Office of Strategic Planning, the various committees (to include Steering Committee and Advisory Committee) and Subcommittees (to include Metrics & Planning as well as Research). One goal of the office is to create a common committee foundation from which to gather input and implement a strategic framework development process. The Draft Vision, Mission, Strategic Objectives, and Core Values were provided to the CoR members. This is a process that is fluid and this is only the initial step. The Office of Strategic Planning looks for all input from across the university to the stated draft vision, mission, goals and objectives. The current timeline is to set goals this summer following more meetings with various councils, committees, institutes and groups across campus. A week ago in the VT News there was an article on the strategic planning process and a link to a Qualtrics Survey for feedback from any university member. <http://www.beyondboundaries.vt.edu/strategicplanning.html> S. Morton asked about capturing feedback from individuals who may not be in a committee or group and presented the idea of a Town Hall. A Town Hall to capture further ideas and feedback is currently being explored. B. Vogelaar asked about approaching the strategic planning from the other direction. Looking back, we have past plans and things faculty have accomplished at the university that are successes. Why not use those as a starting point and move forward from there? The Strategic Planning Office is using the past 3 strategic plans as a baseline and wants to use this forward looking process to capture ideas from the whole university community on what they believe is important to them and to the next generation at the university. B. Knapp provided a bit more background information. There are currently no stated strategic goals in this plan because that is past the point in the process where we currently

are. How do we take the very specific, amazing successes at VT and develop actionable goals from the objectives? This is a work in progress. D. Milly requested a place to get a copy of the slides. Erin stated a link would be provided at the end of the meeting and a handout pointing you to the information you are requesting. Ben Corl asked about the input from students in changing language in the draft strategic objectives from “student success” to “student well-being”. In meetings with Student groups and Student Government Association, students strongly felt the language about their well-being was more encompassing than just success and would like to see that reflected in the next version of objectives. B. Knapp asked for everyone at the CoR table to please bring this information back to their units and disseminate to all the faculty in our areas. This is the time for feedback and to inform. S. Morton pointed out the language for Diversity and Inclusiveness in both the objectives and goals was very similar with the change of only one word. She feels this could use another look to stratify the two more. N. Dudek asked what is the important outcome? What is important as we try and enact the plan? That will depend on the goals and objectives identified by the individual colleges. That is very detailed for what is currently being worked on and until those pieces fall in place, we cannot answer that. Remember the Strategic Planning Office is providing a framework for other units to use as a guide and plug their goals and objective into. B. Vogelaar asked what is the end game? That is ultimately what people are going to pay attention to. S. Duma asked how does the strategic plan intersect with the Destination Areas? There is a lot of time and energy going into those initiatives currently. Hundreds of faculty are being hired into clusters, new curriculum is being developed. How will the two intersect? E. McCann will bring that question to Dr. Pratt-Clarke. U. Kahanovitch asked if we have past strategic plans to draw from? Yes, we are specifically using the last three strategic plans as a baseline. B. Vogelar stated in the Draft Vision statement, the “the” term versus “a” term sounds off-putting. How was that language chosen? It has been through many iterations and groups felt strongly about “the”. Please provide that feedback in the Qualtrics survey. K. McGuire- I can find the slides on-line but cannot download them to share. Erin will look into this issue. In summary, E. McCann asked J. Irish to provide a name for a CoR rep to the Research Subcommittee in the Strategic Planning Process and please use the Qualtrics link for any feedback.

V. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 1625

\*The meeting minutes of March 14th, 2018 were voted on electronically. The absence of a response indicated a positive vote.

Please take note of the following upcoming meetings which will all take place in Burruss 130 from 3:30pm-5:00pm unless otherwise noted:

May 9, 2018

CoR Members in attendance: Jen Irish, Virginia Pannabecker, Andy Volker (for Sally Morton), Jon Greene (for Stefan Duma), Dipankar Chakravarti, Nancy Dudek, Uri Kahanovitch, Deborah Milley, Tom Bell, Sid Madhavan, Rachael Rupnow, Kevin McGuire and Ben Corl

Guests in Attendance: Theresa Mayer, Scott Midkiff, Patty Branscome, Lindy Bucy, Frank Fitzgerald, Peggy Layne, Gary Sherman

Theresa Mayer started off the discussion with a brief overview of the four issues the Commission on Research raised which are Contracts, Hiring of Research Faculty, IRB (Institutional Review Board) delays and Software Licensing delays.

\*IRB- The President's Office commissioned a report for "compliance reporting" to include IRB, IACUC, Export & Compliance, etc. At Virginia Tech, all these separate entities/processes report up to different VPs in comparison with our peer institutions where these all report up to one person. The IRB issue is getting resolved via a contract with Western IRB is a consulting group who has been hired to help Virginia Tech work through some of the backlogged requests. OVPRI is currently working on a timeline for resolution of all the IRB delays/issues.

\*Contracts- There has been a large increase in contracting with industry partners. Industry contracts take a lot more time to negotiate due to their complex nature, smaller dollar awards (generally), involvement of IP, etc. This has put a large strain on our Office for Sponsored Programs. We now have the Center for Advancing Industry Partnerships called LINK.

\*Research Faculty Hires- this issue predates Theresa's time at Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech has many faculty lines/titles and working through the complexities of the different titles and where they fit in each of their respective overarching categories takes time.

Scott Midkiff addressed the Software Licensing issues next.

\*IT is broken down into different departments to include IT Procurement where software licensing falls. The IT department has faced a few issues that have caused delays to include IT's own contracts with vendors. This is not just a research issue but a multi-organizational problem and requires a multi-organizational solution. There were three key factors that lead to the current state of things. First was a large increase in workload. Second, this workload increase resulted in more things coming through review and most brought an increase in complexity (there is the business aspect of the review, the cybersecurity and risk aspect of the review as well as FERPA compliance). Lastly, the vendors we procure licenses from have been causing delays. Why? Virginia Tech doesn't spend big enough dollars with different vendors to make it worth their time to fill out increasingly complex security forms and questionnaires for us. 4-Help, a division of IT, uses a program called Servicenow. One aspect of Servicenow is it helps IT make and track acquisitions. As of 4/3/2018 there were 162 acquisitions in the system for review. IT is trying to deal with the rapid growth, huge increase in complexities of security, law and prioritize requests. Hoping to get to a point where the simple requests can be knocked out first so the entire system isn't being held up by the complex requests and acquisitions. Uri K asked about what software needs to go through the process? Is it all software? Any software that comes with a licensing agreement needs to go through acquisition. Why? The terms and conditions have language buried in them that can be quite complex- an example was given about terms and conditions stating all

domain e-mails are allowed to be sold for marketing purposes, or any improvements made to software belong to the company and not the improver...free software versions are some of the worst! Ginny P asked who ultimately makes the decision on when open source software needs to go through acquisition- What can and can't be used and is it a personal decision? Contracts with an indemnification clause cannot be legally accepted by Virginia Tech or its employees due to state laws. People must read the terms and conditions and know what he/she is signing up for. There was an example of free Dropbox software that was being used to store documents containing PII and was considered a FERPA violation. Be careful what you are using software for and what you are doing with it! Nancy D asked, What level of risk is acceptable? What is the go/no-go on risk? Ultimately the risk lies with the person responsible for a particular entity...for instance, if the risk contains and/or has the most risk for FERPA and student data concerns, it would be Rick Sparks who would ultimately make the call. If the risk was mostly on research, it would be Theresa who would make the call....it depends on who is the stakeholder of that data.

Topic changed to IRB issues: Dipankar C expressed encouragement at the progress starting to be made. Asked to get an idea of where the IRB issues currently stand so he can respond to constituents asking about the progress. Gary Sherman provided an overview. Virginia Tech researched IRB consultants and found Western IRB, a consulting firm that does a lot of work with universities. What is the difference between Virginia Tech IRB and Western IRB? Virginia Tech has capacity issues. Western IRB does not. Uncomplicated IRB reviews can be handled in as little as 3 days. More complicated ones may take 7-10 days. Everyone who was held up in the IRB que at Virginia Tech was sent an invitation to send their pending requests to Western IRB. There's a rumor you have to submit your review twice- once to Virginia Tech IRB and again to Western IRB. There are only 2 forms (Smart Form and Consent Form) that are overlapping that go to Virginia Tech IRB so the request can be tracked. Ultimately, Virginia Tech is still responsible for the requests from Virginia Tech faculty and students. So they are tightly tracked on the front end. There is a messaging issue within Virginia Tech about getting some of this information out to the faculty and students. Dipankar brought up another question about the fact he was concerned that Western IRB was not ready to handle some of the more simple VT requests, because he will get a simple request held up by very intricate and deep-diving clarifications on so many protocols. Deborah M had some feedback for Gary. 1) There needs to be more of an effort placed on human communications, not just electronic communications. 2) It would be extremely beneficial if there were regular workshops held for faculty and students. Virginia Tech peers Penn State are holding workshops for their faculty that are very helpful. UMD has faculty liaisons for vetting- this may not be the best approach but they are putting something in place that works. 3) The information on the Virginia Tech IRB website is lacking and disconnected. If you enter into the website one way, clear instructions are available. If you enter through a different way, those same instructions are not present. 4) If templates were offered to streamline entering information, that would be very beneficial.

Dipankar stated he was impressed by Western IRB. He submitted a protocol which WIRB had questions about but they offered to call him to discuss. A short 15 minute phone call clarified the issue, allowed him to make a simple adjustment and was submitted the next day. Very helpful.

In summary, Jen Irish offered to help Theresa's office by letting the commission know what we can do to help raise some of these pressing issues. Theresa thanked everyone for their communication and feedback.

~End discussion~