Minutes

COMISSION ON RESEARCH

May 9, 2018

130 Burruss Conference Room

3:30pm-5:00pm

Attendees: Jennifer Irish (Chair), Phillip Young for Virginia Pannabecker, Randy Heflin for Sally Morton, Saied Mostaghimi, Alan Michaels, Dipankar Chakravati, Andrew Nielson, Myra Blanco, Kevin McGuire, Ken Miller, Kurt Zimmerman, Nancy Dudek, Uri Kahanovitch, Steve Nagle, Deborah Milley, Rachael Rupnow, Benjamin Corl, and Chris Tysor (Recorder).

Absent: Virginia Pannabecker, Van Crowder, Stefan Duma, Sally Morton, Robert Vogelaar, Sid Madhavan and Thomas Bell

Guests: Peggy Layne, Martin Daniel and Theresa Mayer

I. Approval of the Agenda - Approved by electronic vote

II. Announcements

a. Results of vote for next Commission Vice-Chair/Chair- Alan Michaels has been voted in as the new Vice-Chair for the 2018-2019 year!
b. Commission on Research was notified by Theresa Mayer's office that the Center for Humanities, a college-level center in CLAHS with a research mission, has been approved. No action required. Documents are posted on the CoR Team Drive.

IV. University Climate Survey in Fall 2018 – Martin Daniel

a. Martin Daniel provided a quick update on the upcoming fall 2018 University Climate survey. It will be widely distributed and will be sent to faculty in fall 2018 and to students in spring 2019. The survey has been trimmed from the previous version which was approximately 80 questions to the planned 30 question version. It is attempting to capture high level themes such as how employees feel about leadership, how they feel about their work environment, their colleagues and indexing around employee engagement. The platform for launching the survey has been switched and will have a new feature which is a live dashboard with access to real-time results. The question was asked about who will receive access to the data? The data dashboard will allow information to be pulled and targeted to specific audiences so, for instance, there would be a high-level executive look, a department head view, an employee view. Not sure currently how long it would take to set up the dashboard, but the intent is to provide fairly broad access and actionable data. Myra Blanco asked how will it be ensured there is a representative sample size for the different categories of employees responding to the survey. Martin D replied there is a drop down for employees to choose their track/employee type and the responses will be collated. In the past the response rate has been slightly above average. Alan Michaels asked if the results will be comparable to other peer institutions or prior versions of the survey. Martin mentioned the University is looking to get onto the "Best University's to Work For" list and then they will have comparable data. The survey is altered and asking different questions than in the past so it will be difficult to compare results of the data to previous versions.
b. III. Unfinished Business

a. Report of Ongoing Activities
    a. Committee on Research Competitiveness – Jen Irish read a statement from Dr. Duma. Since the last CoR meeting, the Committee met and developed a plan to generate benchmark data from peer institutions. Stefan, Kurt and Ben developed a strategy and series of shared files that will allow for consistent data gathering processes. Specifically, a set of standardized questions was developed that will be used during interviews with peer institutions. The committee plans to cover a range of universities over the next few months including UVA, Ohio State, Colorado, Purdue, Cornell and NC State. Additional programs will be added as we move through the summer months. Barb will lead discussion groups with internal stakeholders over the summer and fall months. The committee expects to have a final report in spring 2019.

    b. University Library Committee – Phillip Young provided an update. The ULC is developing a report to share with stakeholders, including the Commission on Research. The report is focused on critical library space and infrastructure updates (physical and digital) needed to empower research and learning in a growing university the size of Virginia Tech. Key stakeholder groups include students overall, graduate students, and faculty. The ULC will submit this report to CGSP, CUSP, and COR, as well as others, to request feedback on a report that demonstrates that library space and infrastructure support is a challenge that needs urgent attention. The report will also propose recommendations for addressing this challenge. We will finalize this draft report to circulate for feedback in the next few weeks and will share at that time. The Library Committee will also share it again in fall when Commissions and Committees come back for the 2018/19 year.

    c. Faculty Senate – no update

    d. Revisions to the Faculty Handbook- passed at University Council

    e. Update to Policy 13005 – no update

    f. Open Access Policy update– Kevin McGuire https://sites.google.com/a/vt.edu/cor-oa-policy-working-group/ After presenting to the faculty senate for the 2nd time this semester and after some departmental targeted trainings, the Open Access group has determined they need to revisit and streamline their communication. They have been working for 2 years. They have met with Legal Counsel in that time, discussed policy, created a webpage and FAQ section, have an e-mail address that goes to committee members for questions and have done trainings. They may need to step back and take a look at the delivery of information because maybe the messaging isn't being done in an impactful way. In fall 2018 the plan is to draft a policy which will be brought up to the commission. 2 of their committee members are stepping down and they would like faculty from other areas to participate so it is not so library-centric. They are looking at doing more forum-type/interactive session in fall so they can engage more. Nancy Dudek asked is the low participation a sign to drop the initiative? Jen Irish said she believes this is the future and dropping it would be a bad idea. Deborah Milley reiterated she believes it is just the way the information is being delivered that is the hang-up. This Open Access initiative is going to be (if not already) mandated by many federal funding organizations. Nancy D offered to send

a "How to do a Pitch" power point to the committee if that would be helpful. Kevin mentioned it might also be extremely helpful to have OVPRI send out the messaging for Open Access to the VT News Daily so it is disseminated in another form and by another group on campus.

b. Summary of call for potential topics and/or speakers for next year – So far the items on the list for consideration next year are as follows:

   a. Committee on Research Competitiveness:

      i. Continue focus groups on the topics of increasing support for alternative sources of funding (i.e., foundations, corporate partnerships)--identified in faculty survey--and increasing support for improving competitiveness for government grants (strategies include support for proposal development, establishing government relationships, includes evaluation of what peer institutions receive in terms of support). Consider the following previously or newly identified concerns:

         1. Administrative support for proposals and grants
         2. Support of limited submissions and related internal competition
         3. Policy and procedures for negotiating indirect for industry grants

      ii. Follow up on action/feedback on shared instrumentation report, including the following previously identified and newly identified concerns:

         1. Service contracts for high-end equipment
         2. Inventory of available lab/research equipment
         3. Subsidies for core research facilities

      iii. Other items of continued concern:

         1. Protecting faculty time from excess paperwork/busywork

   b. Continue Open Access Policy development

   c. Continue Policy 13005 revision, "Centers and University Institutes: Establishment, Governance and Programmatic Oversight"

   d. Postdoctoral scholar activities

   e. Follow up on long delays related to IRB, software licensing, contracting of new grants, and research faculty hires on grants

   f. Issues related to regulatory compliance, including IRB

   g. Sabbatical policies

   h. University- or college-wide policies for indirect return to investigators

   i. Review of research components of faculty dossier

   j. Defining research and teaching faculty appointments and expectations more firmly

   k. Communication of F&A

   l. Sid Mostaghimi brought up Research Faculty hiring being an issue and Theresa Mayer explained there was a huge reorganization occurring in Human Resources that will restructure the entire HR Organization. This is being done after an extensive study done by an external consultant. They will be reviewing the 15 faculty tracks we currently have. They are in the process of hiring a new Director of HR and will be looking for a new Divisional Director for Finance, Divisional Director for HR and Divisional Director for IT. Hopefully this realignment and restructuring will help.

IV. New Business

    a. Crowdfunding Resource- Susan Gill came and gave a presentation on VT Jump, the Virginia Tech crowdsource funding mechanism internal to the university. Her overview can be found in the Appendix following the meeting minutes.

    b. Jen reviewed the names of those faculty members whose term is up following this academic year and said thank you for their service.

    c. Dipankar C asked if there would be a way in the future for himself and others in Northern VA to connect via Zoom. He tries to come down once a month for the meetings but then has to plan other meetings on campus around this trip. It would be more accessible for faulty in Northern VA to participate via Zoom. Theresa M indicated she has IT people that could help/support that.

    d. Theresa queried the group to see how many people had received the OVPRI Update on LINK that was sent out. Very few folks indicated they had received it. It seemed it may have only gone out to the Associate Deans and they need to work on the distribution of messages.

V. Adjournment was at 1700.

*The meeting minutes of April 11, 2018, were voted on electronically. Please remember that the absence of a response indicated a positive vote.

Please take note of next year's meetings which will all take place in Burruss 130 from 3:30pm-5:00pm unless otherwise noted:

8 August 2018	9 January 2019
12 September 2018	13 February 2019
10 October 2018	13 March 2019
14 November 2018	10 April 2019
12 December 2018	8 May 2019