

COMMISSION ON RESEARCH

November 10, 2010

325 Burruss Hall

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jesus de la Garza (Chair), Kevin Davy, S. K. De Datta, Serkan Gugercin, Terry Herdman, W. Huckle, Roderick Jensen, Delbert Jones, James Jones, Brenton Laing, Bradley Martens, Heather Moorefield-Lang, Robert Siegle, Satyavrata Samavedi, and Randy Wynne, Tammy Bose (recording secretary).

Absent: Dennis Dean, William Knocke, Lay Nam Chang, Steve Martin, Robert Walters, Chris Zobel.

Guests: Jason Deane (for Chris Zobel), Roderick Hall (for Robert Walters), Ken Miller, Sandra Muse, Nancy Ross (for Lay Nam Chang), Janet Webster (for Dennis Dean),

I. Approval of Agenda: A motion was made to adopt the agenda and was carried.

II. Approval of minutes for CoR meeting October 13, 2010: A motion was made to amend the minutes as follows: Under IV.b.ii: The “Dean” was clarified to say the “Dean of Engineering.” Under IV.b.iii.1. The first sentence of the paragraph was amended to read as follows: “Compliance sub-committee: It was reported that there is a concern by administrators of Virginia Tech that some SRF who are working with students may feel that they should qualify for tenure application.” Under IV.b.iii.3: In the second sentence the word “students” was changed to “fellows”. Under IV.c.i: In the ninth sentence of the paragraph, the words “undergraduate program” were deleted. The minutes as edited were unanimously approved.

III. Announcements:

A. It was announced that the next CoR meeting on December 8, 2010 will be held at the 260 Durham Industrial and Systems Engineering conference room instead of the usual location.

IV. Unfinished Business:

a. Standing Committee Reports:

i. Library Committee: The Committee is licensing a new search product called Summon, purchased from Serial Solutions, a product similar to the Google search engine. The new product does not replace, but is in addition to their current search tools. The library has many databases that flow across each other; Summon can cross the lines, yet has only one search box.

All legal issues regarding the cafe are solved, and the name of the new cafe will be announced soon. Construction is underway and plans are to open in January.

The telephone interviews for the dean search are completed, and open forums have been announced. There is a strong pool of applicants for the position. All were invited to the open forums.

ii. Personnel Committee: There was no report.

iii. Special Research Faculty (SRF) Task Force: W. Huckle reported that the task force last met on October 29, 2010. There was discussion about career opportunities for the SRF. Suggestions were solicited from members of the task force for ideas that could be implemented at no cost. Items identified included ways to help SRF with mentoring and better clarification of the promotion process. The Task Force's discussions determined that career opportunity and job security have a great deal of overlap. As a result, the two sub-committees of Career Opportunities and Job Security have merged. The final report is expected to be completed mid spring semester.

iv. Intellectual Properties (IP) Committee: R. Hall reported in place of W. Knocke. The IP Committee has been significantly more active this year than in the past, and has met monthly. A primary focus area is a desire to work with VTIP to have a more coordinated and better advertised set of educational programs on campus for faculty and students on matters related to IP and tech transfer. As an example there will be a special training session for new faculty conducted by VTIP in early spring semester (being coordinated in conjunction with the CARS/CAGS group). The Committee has spent time at its past two meetings (and in information gathering outside those meetings) on matters related to IP issues that may arise in relation to undergraduate program design courses and design teams. Several departments have situations where student teams work on projects related to companies and industrial concerns, and IP matters arise happenstance and need to be addressed.

b. Research Policies Update: R. Hall reported in place of W. Knocke. As reported previously, the goal is to bring policies 3020 and 13005 into alignment. He noted that the 3020 policies cover all centers, whereas the 13005 policy is specific to interdisciplinary research centers. The writing committee is exploring whether to make 3020 the overarching policy with 13005 filling in specific details. The goal is to have the draft and recommendations by the end of this semester, and to go through the governance procedure in the February-March time frame. There will be broad distribution of the policy for review, including the V.P.'s of VT and and the CoR.

c. Realignment of University Centers: R. Hall reported on the evolution of the decision to realign University Research Centers into other management areas. After being charged to explore realignment by Walters, Hall and Knocke sought feedback on the concept of total realignment from various groups, including all the relevant deans, institute directors, and the chairman of the CoR, who asked that the Commission be kept up to date on the progress of the realignment. It was reported that the Provost, the President, and the Chief Financial Officer of VT were all supportive of the measure.

There were questions regarding the reasons for the realignment, and how the realignment will affect research at VT overall. Hall explained that the first reason was that the new model was more in line with where funding for the centers was provided. The Office of Research provides very little funding for the nine university centers and therefore it made more sense for them to be housed where they are funded. It has also become inefficient to have centers reporting to the vice president's office where there is very little administrative support and oversight. He also explained that there had been significant tension over the years between the former academic deans and the former vice presidents for research over the need for university centers. Faculty members have conflicts as they are forced to make a decision on whether they want to do their work through a center or through their college. Also, as

interdisciplinary research became the norm, and faculty members began to work more naturally across college boundaries without the formation of new administrative units, the number of university research centers has shrunk from nearly 30 to nine at the current time. Based on this trend, it was determined that it was the appropriate time to eliminate the designation “University Research Center.” There are three centers whose management have not yet determined how they will be classified under the new options. When asked about the value of the review process that has been conducted in the past for the University Centers, Hall said that he anticipates that under the revision of policies 3020 and 13005, all centers, including department centers, will be reviewed based on guidelines appropriate for the specific category in which they reside.

d. Research Administration Systems: R. Hall reported that “sandbox” copies of the systems have been requested from both vendors. One has been received and there is a delay on the second, possibly because the company has been purchased. It is not anticipated that the purchase will make that provider less viable. The software will be tested to see if it performs as promised. The name of the technical leader will be announced in a few days. (Post meeting note: Matt Swift from Mechanical Engineering has been named the technical project leader). The subject matter expert on the project is Linda Bucy.

e. Nomination for VTIP Board: The college associate deans had been asked to provide nominations with a one-page bio on the nominee for an open position on the VTIP Board of Directors reserved for a CoR nominee to be selected from a slate of candidates put forward by the Commission. Anju Seth and Joseph O. Falkinham, III were nominated. There was a motion for those two names to be forwarded to the VTIP Board for consideration, and the motion was passed.

V. New Business

a. Institute/Director Reviews.: R. Hall reported, and a schedule of director reviews was handed out to the CoR members. There is a five-year cycle for reviews, and the directors are not reviewed the same year as the institute is reviewed. For example, Dr. Roop Mahajan will be reviewed this spring and ICTAS will be reviewed the following year. For institute reviews, the goal is to conduct the reviews in a short period of time, and to make the reviews less burdensome to those in the university, including the institute employees and CoR members. This will likely involve external reviewers who will be paid consulting fees. For director reviews, a survey will be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the director being reviewed, with input from the director as to who should be surveyed. The report on the director’s strengths and weaknesses will go to that individual’s supervisor.

VI. Adjournment There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.