Members Present: Randy Wynne (Chair), Michael Akers, Kevin Davy, Jesus de la Garza, Serkan Gugercin, Terry Herdman, William Huckle, Delbert Jones, William Knocke, Jeff Moore, Heather Moorefield-Lang, Anita Puckett, Wornie Reed, Arnab Roy, Chris Zobel and Shelly Key (Recording Secretary).

Absent: Lay Nam Chang, Dennis Dean, Guru Ghosh, Bradley Martens, Annie Pearce and Robert Walters.

Guests: Roderick Hall (for R. Walters), Pat Hyer, Edward Lener, Ken Miller, Sandra Muse, Julie Speer, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, and Janet Webster (for Dennis Dean).

I.   Approval of Agenda:
a. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was offered, seconded and was carried.

II.   Announcements
a.   Approval and Posting of the Minutes of March 14, 2012: R. Wynne reported that the minutes from the last meeting on March 14, 2012, were approved by the membership electronically and are available on the Commission Scholar site.

b.   Change in Membership of the Commission on Research: R. Wynne introduced Leslie Thornton-O'Brien as the new staff senate representative for the Commission, replacing Delbert Jones, who is retiring. Rodd Hall will no longer be attending the Commission meetings due to his recent position change.

Next month's Commission meeting will be a brainstorming session on what issues will need to be addressed next year. Commission members were asked to consider nominating a candidate for vice-chair of the Commission on Research for FY 2013.

c.   BOV Approval for Short Term Disability for Restricted Faculty: M. Akers reported that short term disability benefits for restricted faculty, which includes restricted research faculty, have been approved by the Board of Visitors (BOV). This impacts approximately 800 Virginia Tech faculty. Sandra Muse reported that a new contract is being reviewed by legal counsel and is expected to be completed by May 1, 2012. It was noted that long term disability and short term disability benefits were contracted as a package and the new contract will reduce the total cost of the benefits to the university. The new restricted faculty benefits will go into effect on July 1, 2012.

M. Akers, chair of the Human Resource Committee, noted that providing a voice for restricted faculty in governance will be a topic for the COR to review in the coming fiscal year.

d.   Acknowledged Receipt of ICAM Report: R. Wynne reported that Dr. Walters has acknowledged receipt of the ICAM five-year review report which had been accepted by the Commission.

III.   Unfinished Business:
a.   Report of Ongoing Activities
i.   Library Committee: Heather Moorefield-Lang noted that the library now has two new faculty. Monena Hall is the new Library Commons and Assessment librarian. Purdom Linblad is the new librarian for Research and Instructional Services, and acts as a liaison to the English, philosophy and religion departments on campus.

ii.   Centers and Institutes Committee: No new items to report.

iii. Human Resource Committee: M. Akers reported that the committee is developing recommendations for action for FY13.

iv. Research Administration Committee: K. Davy will invite Linda Bucy and Matt Swift to the next Commission meeting to provide an update on the current status of the research administration systems.

IV. New Business:

a. Presentation from Associate Dean for Research and Informatics, University Libraries: Julie Speer, Associate Dean for Research and Informatics of the university libraries, gave a presentation on e-research. University libraries are currently hiring multiple staff and working to create a customized strategic agenda. The long-term goal is to manage digital data storage processes and improve e-research at Virginia Tech. E-research is defined as the use of technology to support existing and new forms of scholarly research, for the purpose of data discovery, curation, and preservation. Research is becoming increasingly web-based and collaborative. In order to share new knowledge created by research efforts, the data compiled must be preserved over time so it can be accessed by other scholars.

Federal funding agencies have new requirements related to data sharing, with policies often requiring public access to data within six to twelve months of publication. New standards for citing data are also being implemented so the data can be used as a credible and permanent source for other research publications. Having high quality data storage and easy access to digital archives increases the visibility of the scholarship, improves research productivity, and increases the impact of the research itself. The Office of the Vice President of Research, university libraries and information technology personnel must work in partnership to create effective data management plans to support the growth of e-research at Virginia Tech.

b. Recommended Changes to the Faculty Handbook: P. Hyer, co-chair of the Task Force on Consulting and Conflict of Interest (COI), presented a few remaining items not addressed in Policy 13010: Individual Conflicts of Interest and Commitment, but rather in the faculty handbook. See attached handouts: "Conflict of Commitment Policies, Commission on Faculty Affairs, CFA Resolution 2011-12 A" and a handout of revisions to Sections 2.14 through 2.16 of the Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook, available on the website of the Office of the Provost. The Office of Research is also developing a web site that will provide additional guidance regarding procedures related to conflict of interest and consulting.

Recommendations regarding consulting privileges for faculty engaged in sponsored grants and contracts were discussed. The policy defines the difference between external consulting and professional service. The external consulting issue hinges on whether there has been compensation from a third party for the consultation. Advance approval and reporting is required for external consulting even if there is no financial compensation, as there may be intangible benefits in the future to the consulting faculty member from the association. The external consulting policy also applies to those who own their own businesses.

Faculty whose appointments are funded by sponsored projects can do consulting, but only proportionate to the percentage of base salary from non-sponsored sources. This practice will align research faculty consulting privileges with federal compliance regulations.

These proposed changes to the faculty handbook will next be forwarded to the Commission on Faculty Affairs, as they are the host commission for addressing these particular issues. The resolution will then move on to University Council for first reading on April 30, 2012. The finalized package will then be submitted to the BOV for review at the June 2012 BOV meeting.

There was some discussion regarding de minimus use. Neither Policy 13010 nor the faculty handbook addresses de minimus use due to the fact that there is no allowable de minimus use under state law. Virginia statues do not allow a de minimus use definition, and Virginia Tech does not have the authority to address this issue.

V. Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.