

COMMISSION ON RESEARCH

May 9, 2012
325 Burruss Hall
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Randy Wynne (Chair), Michael Akers, Kevin Davy, Jesus de la Garza, William Huckle, William Knocke, Jeff Moore, Wornie Reed, Leslie Thornton-O'Brien, Chris Zobel and Tammy Bose (Recording Secretary).

Absent: Lay Nam Chang, Dennis Dean, Guru Ghosh, Serkan Gugercin, Terry Herdman, Delbert Jones, Bradley Martens, Heather Moorefield-Lang, Anita Puckett, Annie Pearce, Arnab Roy, and Robert Walters.

Guests: Ken Miller, Sandra Muse, and Mathew Swift.

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 April 11, 2012:** R. Wynne reported that the minutes from the last meeting on April 11, 2012, were approved by the membership electronically and are available on the Commission Scholar site.

III. Unfinished Business:

a. Report of Ongoing Activities

- i. **Library Committee:** There was no report.

- ii. **Centers and Institutes Committee:** R. Wynne reported that the five-year review for the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS) has been initiated. The external reviewer visit has been scheduled for June 18, 2012.

- J. de la Garza, chair of the review committee for the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), reported that the data collection portion of the review has been completed. The external reviewers, directors from the Texas Transportation Institute and the University of Michigan Transportation Institute, will submit their report at the end of May, 2012. The internal reviews both from the stakeholders committee and the employees of VTTI have begun and the final report will be completed by the end of FY12. The first reading will be presented at the September 12, 2012 Commission on Research meeting.

- W. Knocke reported that he has met with T. Herdman regarding some of the recommendations of the ICAM review. ICAM funding, future faculty leadership development, a summer retreat, space allotment and charter revision are being discussed. These items will be reviewed and a report presented to the ICAM stakeholders in the fall. A letter from Dr. Walters has been submitted to T. Herdman stating that the review process is formally completed.

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

- iv. **Research Administration Committee:** There were no new items to report.

IV. New Business:

- a. The RAS committee formed on May 9, 2011 in order to investigate the feasibility of acquiring an automated RAS for Virginia Tech. The long-term goal is to replace the paper-based system with an automated electronic RAS.

- Most high-level research institutions have similar administrative processes that support research, but very few are automated. The few electronic RAS that exist are still in the early

stages of development. There are currently no fully complete systems commercially available. The committee is searching for a system that integrates and automates the entire gamut of the research administration process, including grant administration, collaboration tools and the COI aspects. The system needs to improve processing for everyone involved, be sustainable and be able to stay abreast of frequently changing government standards.

Recently, Cayuse 424 was successfully implemented at Virginia Tech to interface with grants.gov for the processing of grants.gov research proposals. The committee is doing an in-depth analysis of a more complete system currently in development called Kualo Coeus (KC). KC is an open source foundation product that integrates and more fully automates the entire research administration process. The KC research administration portal provides electronic routing, improves visibility, speeds processing, and does budgeting, agreement tracking and award reporting.

There are several different levels of membership in the KC system, with a choice of different modules and different fee levels. Virginia Tech has not yet joined the system. The product is still very new, and there is no way to be sure that the system will develop in a direction that suits the needs of Virginia Tech. There are about 50 schools that are currently using the KC system. The RAS committee plans an intensive evaluation of the system this summer. A decision will be made by September since the committee charter calls for a system to be in place at Virginia Tech by December 2012. The web site for information on this product is www.kualo.org.

The committee is also looking to improve workload management for the processing of awards in the Office of Sponsored Programs. The goals are to obtain not only an automated RAS but also to build a more cohesive team and to improve the tracking mechanism. There are plans to increase staffing so that if one person in the team is out, there is another person in place who will maintain the integrity of the process. This is difficult as there are many different types of agreements and processing is complex.

b. Recommendations for Vice-Chair for FY2012-13: The Chair for the Commission for FY12-2013 will be M. Akers. For Vice Chair nominees it is preferred that we nominate someone with at least two years remaining on their Commission term.

c. Governance Representation for Research Faculty: S. Muse provided an overview of the history of research faculty (RF) at Virginia Tech. She defined RF as faculty who are normally funded by contracts and grants and have restricted appointments, typically for one or two years. The number and ranks of RF have increased over the years. There are currently 11 officially recognized ranks. Each rank has a different set of expectations, salary range, set of credential requirements, career development path, and where appropriate, a level of student involvement. None of the ranks are eligible for tenure. Instructors are not among the ranks of research faculty.

The Postdoctoral Associate rank is unique among the ranks in that it is a traineeship and is restricted to a duration of no longer than four years. The other ranks are not restricted as to the length of the contract or how often it may be renewed. Research Associate is the entry level rank for RF involved in sponsored projects. Senior Research Associate are above entry level and are expected to function with more independence and responsibility. The Research Scientist and Senior Research Scientist ranks are parallel to the Professorship ranks, not necessarily above them. The Professorship levels of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor have extended appointments at the university and are expected to interact with graduate students and serve on committees. They are expected to have longer term appointments as shorter terms would be a disadvantage to the students. The ranks of Project Associate, Senior Project Associate, and Project Director are considered to be more administrative in nature and often oversee large research projects or several projects within an institute.

Census data shows that since 2001 RF numbers have experienced a 47 percent growth rate and currently total more than 600 members. The university community needs to recognize the value of the contributions of the RF and that RF are an integral part of growth at the university in terms of annual research expenditures.

RF currently have no opportunity to be involved in University governance. The Task Force has recommended this subject be reviewed by COR. A survey will be conducted to determine how the research faculty perceive governance and will explore the areas of community, promotion, and communication.

Recommended Topics for the Commission in FY2012-13: Topics to address in FY12-2013 are RF overload compensation for teaching and T/TT research incentive pay. The University Veterinarian, M.A. McCrackin, will be invited as a guest speaker. There will be discussion of compliance issues. The Human Resource committee will enlarge and look at research faculty career development and voice in governance.

Special thanks were given to L.N. Chang, G. Ghosh, W. Huckle, D. Jones, J. Moore, W. Reed, and A. Roy for their service and contribution to the Commission as their term expires.

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