

COMMISSION ON RESEARCH

December 8, 2010

260 Durham Hall

3:30-5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jesus de la Garza (Chair), Lay Nam Chang, Serkan Gugercin, Terry Herdman, William Huckle, William Knocke, Bradley Martens, Steve Martin, Satyavrata Samavedi, Randy Wynne, Chris Zobel and Tammy Bose (recording secretary).

Absent: Kevin Davy, S.K. De Datta, Dennis Dean, Roderick Jensen, Delbert Jones, James Jones, Brenton Laing, Heather Moorefield-Lang, Robert Siegle, and Robert Walters.

Guests: Roderick Hall (for Robert Walters), Ken Miller, Sandra Muse, Phillip Young (for Heather Moorefield-Lang).

I. Approval of Agenda: The item “The Industrial Affiliate Program” was added V.b.of the agenda. A motion was made to adopt the agenda as amended and the motion was carried.

II. Approval of minutes for CoR meeting November 10, 2010: A motion was made to amend the November 10, 2010 CoR minutes as follows: In section IV.a.iii., in the fifth sentence of the paragraph, the first few words of the sentence were changed to: “The Task Force’s discussions determined that career...” In section IV.a.iv., in the fourth sentence of the paragraph, the word “newer” was changed to “new”. In section IV.c., in the fifth sentence of the second paragraph, “members are conflicted” was changed to “members have conflicts”. A motion was made to adopt the November 2010 minutes as amended and the motion was carried.

III. Announcements:

A. Director of Energy Initiatives: R. Hall reviewed the history behind the creation of the position of Director of Energy Initiatives (DEI). The three main aspects of the job description are to serve as a central resource for energy-related initiatives within the university, routinely report to internal and external stakeholders on energy-related advances in research, and to be aware of research opportunities focusing on energy related fields, developing mechanisms to bring those opportunities to the attention of VT faculty. The DEI will work with ICTAS and other stakeholders and researchers at VT to promote and coordinate multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research policy and initiatives. The DEI will report jointly to ICTAS and the Vice President of Research. It has yet to be determined if the DEI will be based in Washington, D.C. or in Blacksburg, VA. DEI interviews concluded on December 2 and the search committee made recommendations to Drs. Walters and Mahajan on December 9.

B. Dr. de la Garza announced that there will be no CoR meeting in January 2011. The next meeting will be February 9, 2011, at 325 Burruss Hall.

IV. Unfinished Business:

a. Standing Committee Reports:

i. Library Committee: Phillip Young reported in place of Heather Moorefield-Lang. Greenberries has been named the new vendor for the new cafe. They are planning to have the cafe up and running sometime next semester. The name for the new cafe has not yet been announced.

There are four candidates for the dean search, and two of the candidates are scheduled for personal interviews on December 14 and December 21, 2010. The Search Committee will make a decision on this in January, 2011. Details are on the Provost's web site.

The new Summon search software will incorporate everything in digital archives without having to think about which database you are in. The library search pages will look completely different and will continue to change slowly as the system is implemented. The goal is to have this up and running by February.

ii. Personnel Committee: There was no report.

iii. Special Research Faculty (SRF) Task Force: W. Huckle reported that the full task force has not met since the last CoR meeting in November. The committee meets again in a few days. The sub-committee reports will provide pertinent details in their report.

iv. Intellectual Properties (IP) Committee: W. Knocke reported that the committee is currently reviewing aspects of intellectual property (IP) as it relates to student design teams. The committee has a document that will be modified to serve as a resource for students and faculty.

The Center for Survey Research will be assisting with a survey of faculty and graduate students to assess the general state of knowledge and their interest level in IP issues such as technology transfer, commercialization of research, and others. The survey will help to focus future programs on areas where there is broad interest. The committee plans to have the survey ready in February, 2011.

There was a question regarding the IP committee addressing copyright issues with research data that is recorded in an online archive. The policy covers copyright to some degree, but the IP committee not specifically reviewing this at this point. This issue will be identified in the January meeting.

v. Institute Reviews: A schedule was provided at the last CoR meeting, and there was no further report.

b. Research Policies Update: W. Knocke reported that he met with Dwight Shelton, R. Hall, and K. Miller with the goal of drafting a policy document that reviews how to start, evaluate, and integrate an institute or center. Since policy 3020 does not go through a formal governance procedure to be enacted, the policy rewrite team needs guidance as to what are the critical pieces that must remain as part of policy 3020, and which policies specific to centers should be in a companion policy document (currently 13005). The numbering aspect of the policies was considered a secondary issue and the companion policy will be put in the numbering sequence once it has gone through governance.

The writing team will meet on Monday, with a goal of having the initial draft completed by the middle of January, 2011, and ready to be reviewed by the Provost, Dr. Walters, and D. Shelton. The next step would be review by the CoR, deans, and institute directors. While 3020 will not need to go through governance, the companion policy will need formal governance approval.

c. Realignment of University Centers: W. Knocke reported that the realignment is ongoing. The goal is to have the process completed on all centers by Spring break.

d. Research Administration Systems: R. Hall reported that Matt Swift has been named as the technical leader for the Research Administration Systems (RAS) implementation team. He will be responsible for the integration of the pre-award system to be purchased from a vendor and post-award improvements made internally over the next two years or more. The “sandbox” copies of the systems of both vendors are now in place, and will be tested to see if they perform as needed and advertised. Negotiations with vendors will begin in January, 2011.

V. New Business

a. Short Term Disability Proposal for Restricted Faculty: W. Knocke reported that the Compliance Sub-committee of the SRF Task Force has been looking at the issue of short-term disability (SD) for restricted faculty. Teaching, administrative and professional faculty begin their employment with 1,040 hours of sick leave. However, faculty with restricted appointments currently accrue sick leave at a rate of ten hours per month, and are not eligible for long-term disability (LD) until they have been employed for a period of six months. If a major medical issue arises early in their appointment, since the faculty member has accrued minimal disability benefits they would have to take leave without pay.

The committee came up with a proposal and a plan to provide SD benefits for restricted faculty. A handout was provided that reviewed cost values associated with a plan that is in place with a vendor through Georgia Tech. Due to VT purchasing procurement rules, the contract may have to be put out for bid by other vendors, but the costs should be similar to what is presented regardless of the vendor. VT may opt to have the LD coverage vendor simply expand the coverage to include SD benefits, and this will save time. There was discussion about the importance of having the individual and the policy holder determine the legitimacy of sick leave, and without the involvement of the project's PI.

The committee discussed the initiation of a program for providing SD coverage, and the participation of the university in the costing of the program. SD covered by grants would add six percent to the fringe benefit rate. The goal is to eventually have the cost of the SD covered by the research grant, and in the transition period the university will provide a portion of financial support over the first three years. SD policy participation will be mandatory for SRF. Last week the proposal was presented to CFA and was unanimously endorsed.

It was noted that according to the handout, SD coverage is more expensive than LD in every instance. This is possibly due to the fact that SD benefits are more frequently used.

W. Knocke presented a motion that the CoR endorse the proposal that the university provide a SD program for restricted faculty, recognizing that restricted faculty includes the SRF. The motion was unanimously approved.

b. Industrial Affiliate Programs: W. Knocke mentioned how industrial affiliates (IA) play an integral role in research at VT. He reviewed the history of the affiliate programs as they originally developed more than 20 years ago. He noted that the guideline document in OVPR for IA programs is dated 2003. He suggested that it is time to look carefully at how IA programs are structured, intellectual property issues associated with IA programs, export control issues,

financial issues related to the Foundation, and others. OVPR plans to appoint a task force in the spring. CoR would nominate one or two of those on the task force, and choose faculty or directors that have experience with IA programs. CoR will contact the Associate Deans of all the colleges to solicit nominations, and then select from that group.

K. Heidbreder feels that there should be a moratorium on new IA programs until some of these issues are resolved. There was concern that this may create difficulty for those who already have agreements with IA in varying stages of implementation.

VI. Adjournment There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.