

COMMISSION ON RESEARCH

December 9, 2009

325 Burruss Hall

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: J. Ball, R. Benson, L. Coble, D. Cook, D. Dean, S. K. De Datta, J. de la Garza, R. Hall, W. Huckle, T. Inzana, B. Laing, S. Martin, K. Miller, R. Siegle, R. Veilleux, P. Young,

Members Absent: T. Fox, R. Jensen, D. Jones, J. Jones, T. Herdman, S. Samavedi,

Others: S. Muse, C. Montgomery

- 1. Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda was offered by R. Siegle and seconded by T. Inzana and carried.
- 2. Approval of the minutes for CoR meetings November 11, 2009:** A motion to approve the minutes was offered by D. Dean and seconded by T. Inzana and carried.
- 3. Announcements:** D. Dean reported that the interview process is complete for the Director of the Carilion Research Institute (VTCRI) and negotiations are currently in progress.
- 4. Report from Library Committee:** P. Young circulated a copy of a graph titled “Collections Spending as Pct Total Spending” in comparison to our peers, which was discussed at the last Library Committee meeting. P. Young reported that we are at the bottom of our peers in total spending, but we in the top percentage in funds spent on materials. This report led to a discussion on space in the current main library. The Dean of Libraries has discussed a proposed automated storage compartment that would be connected to the library. P. Young reported that this addition would store about a million books therefore allowing more space in the library. P. Young reported that this proposed addition is on the list of items to be funded on the state level, but he is not sure when it will actually take place.
- 5. Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention Charter:** W. Huckle reported that he had corresponded with the director of the Peace Center, Jerzy Nowak, regarding the Commission’s review of the charter. He explained that many felt that the mission of the center was more outreach and education based rather than research. W. Huckle then suggested that he consider routing his charter through the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs. W. Huckle reported that J. Nowak responded positively to this suggestion and plans to submit the Center’s charter to that Commission.
- 6. Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER) Review:** S. Muse reported that the review of this center is still in process and the chair of the committee plans to have it complete after the holidays. S. Muse reported that we anticipate that their report will be ready for review in February.

- 7. Center for Macromolecules and Interfaces Institute (MII) Review:** T. Inzana reported that a committee has been established for this review and that we can anticipate receiving materials from Director Richard Turner by the beginning of the spring semester. T. Inzana reported that the goal is to complete this review by the end of spring. W. Huckle reported that the Commission's representative on this review is T. Herdman.
- 8. Center for Human-Computer Interaction (CHCI) review:** T. Inzana reported that a committee has been formed for this review and that we anticipate presenting them their charge before the winter break. We anticipate receiving materials from the director, Francis Quek, early in the spring semester. The target for this review completion is also the end of spring.
- 9. Open-Access White Paper:** P. Young distributed a white paper on the Serials Crisis and Open Access movement. P. Young explained this was developed in a response to the proposed budget cuts in spring 2009, which the library eventually avoided. P. Young developed this paper to communicate the problems with journal economics and the inflation that occurs every year.

P. Young explained that there were two events that led to this movement in 2008- the NIH mandate (to make freely available online any published articles describing work conducted with NIH funds) and the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences mandate, which was the first, large university mandate in the United States. Transitioning from journal economics to open access might be an effective way to address the issues that our library is facing. P. Young explained that the advocates of open access feel that it provides fundamental access to research regardless of fluctuating journal economics, but that it is questionable if this will save the university money in the long run.

T. Inzana noted that this is a major change in how journal publishers do business. He explained that many faculty members now choose to access journals on-line due to their discounted journal subscription rates, which has resulted in a decrease in membership revenue. T. Inzana explained that the ISI rankings are high on open-access articles; they charge a lot because there is no other source of revenue. P. Young explained that open-access started in fields such as life sciences and physics where quick dissemination is deemed important, but is moving to the social sciences as well.

- 10. Center Director Review Process versus Center Review:** C. de la Garza circulated a document outlining the draft procedures for the review of Institute and Center Directors. The goal is to separate and review the director from the center/institute itself.

C. de la Garza explained that a new step has been added to the procedure to establish a standing three-person personnel committee that will be coordinating these reviews. The committee will be composed of two elected members of the Commission and one ex-officio representing the VP for Research. One of the two elected members from the Commission will rotate off every year and one new member will be elected. L. Coble suggested that the Vice-chair of the commission become the chair of the personnel committee.

C. de la Garza explained that the process of this review would begin with the personnel committee meeting with the director and gathering activity reports for the previous 5 years along with a list of names the director feels would be appropriate contacts for feedback regarding their performance. These contacts can be either internal or external to the university and will be reviewed and approved by the center/institute's stakeholders committee. The personnel committee will then administer a survey to those individuals to collect feedback. The survey will be very similar to that used to evaluate senior administrators and would include questions customized to the particular directorship or center. After a review and analysis of this information, the personnel committee will produce a list of strengths and weaknesses of the director and present it to the VP for Research. The formal evaluation and reappointment of the director for a term of 1 year, 3 years, or 5 years will then be decided by the VP for Research and will be reported back to the Commission within 45 days of his decision.

R. Benson suggested that the personnel committee should consult not only with the director, but also with stakeholders and others to identify those chosen to complete the survey assessment. R. Hall explained that, akin to the current "360 analysis" of senior administrators, the survey would be sent out to the whole constituency of the center/institute in addition to the group of 'peers' identified by the personnel committee. R. Benson also noted that not all center/institute director's report to the VP for Research and that this policy should reflect the existing supervisor/reporting line relationships. Thus the decision to reappoint still falls to the direct supervisor of that director. S.K. De Datta agreed and stated that the personnel committee should report their findings to the direct supervisor. C. de la Garza agreed to work with R. Hall to amend the document to reflect these suggested changes and circulate it before the next Commission on Research meeting in February.

11. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by R. Siegle and seconded by T. Inzana and the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 pm.