Research Committee Membership: Chair- Jim McCubbin- CBBS, Members- Peter van den Hurk- CAFLS, Jan Rune Holmevik- AAH, Megan Mowrey-CBBS, Dvora Perahia- CES, Joshua Summers- CES, Sarah Griffin-HEHD, Julie Northcutt-CAFLS, Gypsy Teague-Libraries, Jackie Gillespie (delegate), Renea Hardwick (delegate)

In 2013-2014, the Research Committee has been working with the several groups on campus, including the Office of Research and Clemson University Research Foundation (CURF). Accomplishments are as follows:

Assessment of Clemson University infrastructure for institutional support of faculty research and scholarship

Last year, the Research Committee launched a campus-wide survey of usability of our research support infrastructure. This year, we used this assessment to provide feedback and recommendations to Vice President for Research (VPR) Larry Dooley. These recommendations were explicitly designed to remove unnecessary impediments to faculty research, and to improve the support infrastructure for enhanced faculty scholarly success. Research Committee Chair McCubbin met with VPR Larry Dooley to discuss results of the Research Committee Survey of Clemson University institutional support for faculty research. A follow up meeting was attended by VPR Dooley and Dr. Sheila Lischwe, the new Director of Sponsored Programs, and key Research Committee members involved with the survey. VPR Dooley briefed committee members with information that he shared with the Board of Trustees on strategic planning for Clemson’s research mission success. VPR Dooley discussed results of the Senate Research Committee Survey of Institutional Support for Research with the Executive/Advisory Committee and has engaged the Faculty Senate in meaningful conversations to facilitate institutional support for the faculty research mission. The Research Committee recommends ongoing assessment of Clemson University research support for faculty research and scholarship.

Other ongoing assessments of university infrastructure affecting faculty research effectiveness include: 1) a request for reassessment of Clemson University human resource requirements for hiring of university faculty and staff which are notably more burdensome and less secure than U.S. federal government requirement for I-9 level identification for prospective employees. This is currently in discussion with the Department of Human Resources.
2) a recommendation for future consideration of university purchasing policies to determine the reason why purchases from personal faculty credit cards are reimbursable during travel, but not for local purchases of research supplies.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Research Committee Chair Jim McCubbin and Senate President Kelly Smith met with University General Counsel Chip Hood, Chief Financial Officer Brett Dalton, and Interim Vice President for Research Larry Dooley on June 6th to initiate processes to draft a new comprehensive University Policy on Conflict of Interests. The Chair of the Research Committee represented the faculty on this committee. The new draft policy has been endorsed by VPR Dooley, and forwarded to the Faculty Senate President, Clemson
University CFO Brett Dalton, University Counsel Chip Hood, and Interim Provost Nadim Aziz for acceptance as a university policy.

Authorship Guidelines

Faculty Senate Research Committee provided the following recommendations on the draft authorship guidelines to Tracy Arwood, AVP for Compliance. Recommendations:
1) The document might best be considered a statement of “Best Practices.” Some of the wording is difficult, if not impossible to implement in the real world. For example, before many studies begin, no one can realistically envision the multiplicity of manuscripts and authorship possibilities and roles that may result from a rich dataset. Therefore, conflict between the document and research realities should not give rise to claims of “violation of policy”. We do not want this document to create inappropriate expectations and encourage grievances by oversimplification of the complexities of the research process.
2) Many scientific and professional societies have published specific statements regarding their disciplinary ethical policies on authorship. This document should explicitly acknowledge those existing ethical principles and defer to them when appropriate.
3) Make guidelines applicable to all scholarly works. The terms “science” and perhaps even “research” may be too restrictive for the disciplinary diversity of Clemson University.
4) Although we wish to continue these discussions, we think the university should continue to move forward. It is important for us to have working guidelines, and we can continue to refine these in the future.
University guidance documents can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/integrity/resources.html

Intellectual Property Committee

Research Committee collaborated with VPR Dooley, University Counsel Chip Hood, Clemson University Research Foundation (CURF) representatives Vince Albritton, Casey Porto and JoAnna Floyd, and Intellectual Property (IP) Committee Chair Cindy Lee to design changes in the Faculty Manual IP Committee description. The purpose of the proposed changes was 1) to redesign the makeup of the IP Committee, 2) to streamline of the overall process of disclosure review, 3) to ensure adequate faculty representation and oversight of the disclosure review process. Final recommendations were forwarded to the Faculty Senate Policy Committee for finalization and presentation for Senate approval. Ongoing work should focus on broader University IP policy refinement and development.

Campus Recognition for Faculty Scholarly Achievements

The Research Committee has been involved in planning and design of a campus feature to recognize Clemson faculty with outstanding scholarly achievements. The Committee provided the following comments to John Ballato and the Office of Research.
1) The Research Committee suggests that a set of disciplinary-based peer review committees be formed to make recommendations on individual faculty nominations. It seems to be a daunting task to formulate a single committee that could anticipate and create a master list of meritorious honors/awards for all university disciplines. For example, using professional society size as a criterion for acceptance of “Fellow” status is perhaps over simplistic. There are several internationally important
professional societies that are purposefully small in size because their membership criteria include extraordinary accomplishment or contributions to the field.

2) The Research Committee feels that the review committees should have appropriate disciplinary representation. It is difficult for experts in some fields to accurately assess the accomplishments from faculty in radically different disciplines. For example, it may be problematic for liberal arts accomplishments to be highly valued by some faculty from highly technical disciplines, and vice versa. If we don’t carefully and thoughtfully allow disciplinary subject matter experts to evaluate accomplishments in their own field, then the door could open for cross disciplinary bias and conflict. We don’t want this to divide our campus.

Corollary: Our current organization of colleges is not necessarily a good taxonomy of academic disciplines and should be avoided as an organizational basis for peer review.

3) We feel that the scholars’ walk should grow as faculty members are inducted.

4) We recommended study of the University of Minnesota’s scholars’ walk, to gain perspective from their experience.

Ongoing work is recommended to further refine and facilitate development of a university campus feature that will recognize Clemson University faculty research and scholarly accomplishments.