Faculty Senate Research Committee
Annual Report, 2014-2015 Term

Agenda items addressed during the 2014-2015 Faculty Senate term (in approximate chronological order)
HR item #1: hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students)
Proposed: “Strategic plan for increasing CU research and scholarly productivity, Incentive element”
HR Item #2: proposed change to leave eligibility for postdoctoral research scholars
COFAR supercircular
IP Intellectual Property committee
Conflict of Interest (COI) policy item from VPR
Evaluations of research contributions in Form 3, TPR

Research committee members:
Amy Lawton-Rauh (chair) (AFLS) Daniel Smith (AAH)
Jan Holmevik (AAH) Daryl Max Guffey (BBS)
Chenning Tong (E&S) Wayne Goddard (E&S)
Joshua Summers (E&S) Sarah Griffin (HEHD)
Jackie Gillespie (del) (HEHD) James Gaubert (del) (BBS)

Others that attended committee meetings this term:
Dr. Sheila Lischwe (Office of Sponsored Programs, 1 meeting), Dr. Larry Dooley (Interim VP Research, 2 meetings), Jim Kerr (HR, 1 meeting), Mack Howard (HR, 2 meetings), Connie Wallace (Graduate Student Intern, 5 meetings), Wrenne Bartlett (UPIC Student Intern, 1 meeting), John Mueller (HR, 1 meeting), HR representatives (Berinthia Allison, Samantha Bass, Kristina Taylor, 1 meeting)

Committee meeting dates, time and locations:
2:30-4:00/4:30PM, 306 Biosystems Research Complex or G104B Biosystems Research Complex

Agenda Items:
1. HR item #1: hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students)
   Issue: Hiring process for research scientists (especially international scholars) needs to be clarified and simplified for faculty Principal Investigators and the scholars that they are recruiting, hopefully using a University-wide procedure and clear, accessible communication of resources already available.
   Actions: The committee met with Mack Howard (HR) and learned about the differences amongst visa types and their processing plus the general responsibilities for facilitating applicants at Clemson. The committee provided suggestions for website changes including a clickable flowchart and videos for several specific items that we considered to be hurdles for applicants. We focused on what would help communicate with non-native English speakers, especially those located outside of the U.S. when inquiring about forms, documentation, and timelines. The last update indicated that HR was trying to implement some of the suggestions and is working with the Office of Global Engagement.
   Status: The committee has been poised to provide feedback on demo website pages and quick step documents since November 2014 and a prototype feedback meeting was rescheduled. The committee will contact Mack Howard (HR) and the Office of Global Engagement in May, after tax season, to move forward.

2. Proposed: “Strategic plan for increasing CU research and scholarly productivity, Incentive element”
   Issue: The committee provided extensive feedback input to Dr. Larry Dooley (Interim VP-Research) from an extramurally funded PI perspective (in writing, directly at a committee meeting, and in summary after the meeting)
   Actions: The committee provided extensive feedback input to Dr. Larry Dooley (Interim VP-Research) from an extramurally funded PI perspective (in writing, directly at a committee meeting, and in summary after the meeting). The committee focused on how the proposed incentives would be received, suggested a list of
Faculty Senate Research Committee

alternatives (including non-monetary actions), and discussed frankly whether the incentives would likely achieve the metric goals for increasing CU research and scholarly productivity and stature.

Status: The incentives document is waiting for comments and feedback from HR. In a follow-up meeting, the committee requested to be included in at least 1 more round of edits and feedback before the incentives document is discussed broadly across campus.

3. HR Item #2: proposed change to leave eligibility for postdoctoral research scholars

Issue: From Jim Kerr (Director, HR partners, Clemson University) “Currently post-doctoral employees are not eligible for leave benefits. In an effort to help bolster Clemson’s competitive position for Post-Doctoral candidates, it has been proposed that these employees be eligible to participate in the University’s Annual leave, Sick leave and Holiday programs. -- With the exception of four Post-Docs (where there would be minimal additional cost), there would be no added cost to the colleges. One concern that may arise from research faculty may be when a Post-Doc requests to take vacation at an inopportune time in relation to the grant schedule. The leave programs would need to be managed by the PI to assure adequate research resources are available to keep the project on track. -- Please provide your thoughts and guidance.”

Actions: The committee provided input to Jim Kerr and HR from an extramurally funded PI’s perspective, via a summary of points raised in our meetings plus at one of our committee meetings with Jim Kerr and other HR representatives in attendance (see visitors list above).

Status: The Provost approved this benefit and HR enacted it, starting 1.January.2015. There was no indication that this information is being distributed at the department level across campus. The committee requested, at the regular Faculty Senate meeting, that senators please announce this change in their colleges and in Department meetings. No additional action by the committee appears to be necessary at this time.

4. COFAR supercircular from OSP: Uniform Guidance Training Module, ~April 2015

Issue: New federal guidelines for federally funded research are being implemented at Clemson (and all Universities, research institutes, etc.) starting in 2015. A website link to the COFAR supercircular document (https://cfo.gov/cofar/). The committee worked with Dr. Sheila Lischwe (OSP) both within the committee and as a representative of the Research: Uniform Guidance committee (Lawton-Rauh). There are decision points related to Federal-level allowable items that may or may not be allowable at the State or University levels.

Actions: Dr. Lischwe presented items currently known about how implementation of supercircular requirements will impact PIs, including training. Sheila went through the draft training module with the committee and we provided input and suggestions. Input provided directly to Dr. Lischwe, mainly clarifying that all regulations in this module are from Federal Regulations applicable to awards issued on or after 26.Developer.2014.

Status: The OSP is currently finishing another draft of the training module with voiceover. This next draft will be sent to our committee for review and final input before release. Principle Investigators that have recently renewed their PI Certification will just need to complete this separate module. All future PI Certifications will have this information incorporated into the existing modules. Additionally, the committee remains committed to providing research-supported evidence to provide input on the priorities placed on the supercircular items that are decision points relying upon alignment of Federal and State or University allowable items.

5. IP Intellectual Property committee

Issue: University committee, Senate Representative

Actions: Substantial progress was made for IP decision evaluation and confirmation since 2014 when this committee provided suggestions to CURF (CU Research Foundation). One item: implementation of stage strategy to make progress expedient with regularly scheduled meetings, use of status update systems on Blackboard, and ad hoc review panels (rotating). Copyright issues for course materials is still under heavy discussion (this is a Scholastic Policy activity).

Status: The Faculty Senate is represented directly on the ‘IP Policy’ committee and will remain updated.
6. Conflict of Interest (COI) policy item from VPR

**Issue:** The Board of Trustees is concerned that Clemson does not have a formalized COI policy in place. Documents previously came through Faculty Senate (while James McCubbin was Research Chair) regarding Conflicts of Interest and are now with the General Counsel.

**Actions:** Dr. Larry Dooley, Interim VP Research presented an update for the committee.

**Status:** There will be an annual questionnaire via InfoEd to determine if COIs exist. If COI exists, then a committee will review, manage and assist with reporting COIs to Federal funding agencies such as NSF, NIH, DOE, USDA as appropriate. Currently, the General Counsel is determining language specifics as well as exactly who is required to complete this survey. The Committee will request an update in time for our August 2015 committee meeting.

7. Evaluations of research contributions in Form 3, TPR

**Issue:** The committee is responding to feedback from faculty indicating concerns about accurate, meaningful evaluation and acknowledgment of research and scholarly activities in their departments (specifically in Form 3 evaluations). Form 3 evaluation guidelines are Departmental-specific but even within departments, scholarship from research achievements is derived from multiples types of innovative approaches that may be difficult to communicate and evaluate.

**Actions:** The committee initiated a general discussion to identify if and/or how Faculty Senate can respond or address these concerns. The result is the following set of questions to be addressed at our next committee meeting following additional research from within Clemson and at other Universities: Does the committee formalize a ‘best practices’ or ‘research mission of the university’ type document? Is such a document informative? The results of ‘perceived institutional support for research’ survey and ‘Research Evaluation Approaches’ documents were examined to generate specific discussion points, determine options, and determine whether such a document is warranted or contributes positively towards research resources and recognition. Committee member Daniel Smith also searched other institutions and the committee discussed viability and relevance plus appropriate location for such language or communication. This discussion may reveal specific issues or actions that we could discuss with administration to more formally emphasize the similarities and differences in how research efforts are evaluated in reviews for Form 3 and TPR.

**Status:** At our next committee meeting, we will look at the Best Practices for TPR document plus anything in the faculty manual related to practices for Form 3. If there is a disconnect between Form 3 and TPR review, should there be a note in the Best Practices for TPR that provides a way for resolving disconnect? Goal setting process should consistently be part of knowing expectations for Form 3 evaluation results based upon clear communication with the Department Chair. We will look at the Best Practices TPR and the Best Practices for Form 3.

8. Other items discussed briefly:

a. Staff paybands and state guidelines (offering competitive positions to hire postdocs and research support staff)
b. Research visibility (increasing the presence of research accomplishments reporting on campus)
c. Review of previous informal campus-wide survey on perceived institutional support for research
d. Start-up package offerings (for competitive recruitment and retention of faculty)