Appalachian State University
[University Research Council](#)
 January 23, 2024
Approved Minutes (partially generated by the use of AI)

The chair of the URC convened the URC meeting at 4:02pm

Present: Becki Battista, Charna Howson, Jenn McGee, Twila Wingrove, Shante'
Mathes, John Wiswell, Ann Kaplan, Reza Foroughi, Andres Tellez, Grace Plummer,
Elaine Berry, Ashley Colquitt, Dennis Guignet, Heather Waldroup, Ross Gosky,
Gary McCullough, Nicholas Cline, Karen Fletcher, Christine Hendren, Adam Hege
Excused: Gabe Casale
Guests - Paul Meggett, Meghan Wills

Approval of November Minutes
Jennifer McGee (motion) / Shante' Mathes (second) - Approved

New Business
Policy Collaboration between the URC and General Counsel

Based on the input from the previous URC meetings, the URC will focus on exploring three
policies. The aim is to understand perspectives on policy content and to work towards updated
drafts or new policies.

- [Buyout Policy for](#) [Externally Sponsored Projects](#)
- [Payment to Human Subjects](#)
- [Data Management and DataOwnership](#)

Guests Paul Meggett and Meghan Wills, General Counsel at Appalachian, provided an overview
of the Office's role and engagement with policy development and compliance.

Paul Meggett has held previous positions as in-house counsel at UNC healthcare and in-house
counsel at Chapel Hill, where he spent time working on research matters, clinical trials,
sponsored research, and more basic research. He underscored the role of General Counsel in
supporting the institution's compliance while facilitating progress in research endeavors.

Meggett highlighted the complexity of regulatory frameworks in higher education. He expressed
that collaborating and baselining can help to understand of the difference between a guideline
and a policy. There are more than 300 different federal laws and regulations that apply to the
operation of campus. He emphasized the importance of aligning policies with federal, state,
institutional (UNC), and campus (App State) regulations.

In-house counsel has one client – the university – it's not a person. A statute tells General Counsel who has authority to act on behalf of the institution: a chancellor or the Board of Trustees; the Board of Governors acts on behalf of the entire system and can delegate authority to a chancellor who may then further delegate to other people. Because General Counsel has only one client, they 'folks understand that you all are our partners.'

The policy manual has been in the process of being 'cleaned up.' The policy manual had included all kinds of things that people thought were a policy but didn't belong in a policy manual; for example, some of the finance items only related to the finance team and some of the HR information was only for internal HR. A policy manual should only include things that pertain to everybody.

A Division of Institutional Integrity was created to deal with compliance and risk issues and to streamline policy management. A Compliance Office is being created within the division and the are searching for a Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer.

Meghan Wills helps navigate putting together policies and helping manage the policy manual and will be the URC contact as the URC collaborates on this project. Wills job allows her to get into the 'nitty gritty' of the policy work and makes sure a distinction is made between what goes into a policy – the rules - and what goes into a procedure that talks about how we comply with the rules. It is also important to reference appropriate supporting documents or policies. Wills helps to ensure that App State polies are not out of compliance with the system or the laws that regulate the pieces.

It was emphasized that the URC shouldn't reinvent the wheel and that a good starting point on policies is looking at other institutions to see what they have come up with around the topic.

A question was posed about a policy for Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is a topic that is being worked on on campus and there is caution about anything put into open source AI as it becomes public domain. There is an education perspective and a cyber security perspective that are being looked into. Two AI task forces are active right now and there is going to be an information gathering phase.

The Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

The strategic plan aligns with Strategic Direction 2 of the university's strategic plan for 2022-2027.

It was developed with input from faculty senate, deans, associate deans, institute center directors, and various campus-wide town halls. It will be implemented over the next four years.

The draft took into account recommendations from an external review by the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) and the National Organization of Research

Development Professionals (NORDP) to ensure alignment with national standards and best practices.

Four primary goals were established: awareness, productivity, capacity building, and engagement. Strategies were devised under each goal, with multiple action items identified for implementation.

Priority areas, including processes, faculty engagement and support, student support, capacity building, partnerships, and communication, were identified as crucial across the entire strategic plan.

Various avenues allow for participation in implementing the four-year plan, including inviting the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) to department meetings, providing feedback through a Google form, and submitting ideas for areas of excellence.

All of campus is invited to submit ideas for areas of excellence. Two tracks are available: discipline-based expertise and critical societal or real-world topics where the university can make a significant impact. Submitters will also be able to identify research infrastructure needs.

Announcements

AI Resources shared:
- · The University Libraries AI Symposium is on April 5th. This site (https://library.appstate.edu/about/ai-symposium) will be updated with more information as it becomes available.
    - ○ Submit proposals by Feb 26 https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeu-u8GgpF6I9inMkrfeGuJY-e8xHG2y3aX44hwtPcEVDe7Mw/viewform

- · App State AI Syllabus Guide: https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/app_state_ai_syllabus_guidance.pdf

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn (Grace Plummer), which was seconded (Charna Howson) and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.