

Appalachian State University
[University Research Council](#)
[URC AsULearn site](#)
February 18, 2025 - 4:00-5:00 PM
Approved Minutes

Meeting time: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Karen Fletcher convened the meeting at 4:01 PM.

Present: Shante' Mathes, Ellen Cowan, David Russell, Gabe Casale, Karen Fletcher, Becki Battista, Ashley Marshall, Christine Hendren, Xiaofei Tu, Ashlea Green, Adam Hege, Twila Wingrove, Qingqing Sun, Jennifer McGee, Heather Waldroup, Dennis Guignet, Panda Powell, Chauntee Thrill, Nimet Degirmencioglu, Ashley Colquitt, Nicholas Cline, Qingqing Sun, Charna Howson, Justin Cervero

Excused/Absent: Alan Needle, Grace Marasco-Plummer

Admin: Whitney Wallett

Guests: Ross Gosky

Welcome to new URC member(s) & Introductions

New member: Justin Cervero, Director of IT Systems and Research Computing (ITS)

- Justin Cervero introduced himself stating that he has been with Appalachian State since 2003, is a graduate of the Computer Science Program, and is currently the Director of IT Systems and Research Computing. The Systems Administration part of his team runs the background systems for the university (e.g., Google, desktops, software distribution, etc.). Research computing is a relatively new function for ITS as research on campus has grown and the need for enterprise centralized research, computing, and storage has emerged. He has spent the last year assessing what researchers on campus really need, how budgets might accommodate that need, and getting the seeds of research computing platforms established. Together with Tom Van Gilder and Keith Werner, Justin meets consistently with Dr. Hendren and the ORI to help prepare for the anticipated significant growth in coming years. Justin's team is also responsible for the administration of REDCap and cloud infrastructure for the university; and is currently in charge of most of ITS' AI technical resources as he and his group manage the Microsoft Cloud and Google Space. He anticipates that AI will remain tightly coupled with Research Computing moving forward.
 - David Russell asked whether there was any faculty interest in an RStudio server. Answer: There has been interest and that there are several people

on his team dedicated to it. The server was grown significantly last summer, but students have tended to monopolize its use and max out its limits in ways that would make its use for actual research purposes challenging. A separate instance might be required for faculty use. Is the current server is available university-wide or just for certain departments? Answer: In theory, it is usable for anyone on campus. To use the server, a course in Banner is designated as requiring access to RStudio and ITS-managed identity systems facilitate the access. If interested in an attempt to use the existing server, please contact Justin directly.

Approval of Minutes -

January 21, 2025 [meeting minutes](#)

Motion to Approve by: Heather Waldroup

Motion Seconded by: Panda Powell

No discussion. All in favor. None opposed. Gabe Casale and Justin Cervero abstained.

Motion passed.

New Business

- I. Presentation: Office of Student Research - Becki Battista, Director
 - A. Becki has been with OSR since 2015, first as the Assistant Director and now as the Director. She is also a faculty member in Public Health and Exercise Science.
 - B. OSR is part of University College and was designed to support the work of students both inside and outside of the classroom. Becki reports through Ted Zerucha and Mark Ginn in Academic Affairs and also works closely with the ORI. OSR receives a total budget of \$110,000 from the State each year, and that amount hasn't increased in the amount of time that Becki has been in her position; increasing the budget is a priority to help allow more support of students. Becki serves as OSR's Director, while Kathy Weaver Stevens serves as OSR's Research Programs Administrator responsible for their budget(s) and much of the communication with the Office. If anyone has program or budget-related questions, Kathy is typically the first person to approach.
 - C. OSR provides funding for both graduate and undergraduate students with 2/3 of its budget typically spent on undergraduates vs. 1/3 on graduate students. Grad students tend to have a heavier research load as they have a thesis project or dissertation to complete, whereas undergraduates don't always have to do an associated research or thesis project. The budget also tends to be split in terms of travel vs. research, with 2/3 of the budget going to travel vs. 1/3 to research activities.

- D. Mission statement: The Office of Student Research at Appalachian State University supports and promotes learning through mentored research experiences with Appalachian State faculty and other national and international scholars and professionals. We believe that these special collaborative relationships are among the most rewarding experiences for both faculty members and students. The focus remains on faculty-mentored research experiences and creative activities. Becki stressed the 'faculty-mentored' component, indicating that the guidance provided by a faculty member is a critical piece for the students involved.
- E. OSR's primary function is to provide grants for student research, and historically, the Office has not turned down many applicants or projects; however, the need to do so may arise if the budget is not increased and if an increase in demand observed post-COVID continues. The OSR attempts to spend its entire budget each year as it is replenished by the State annually.
1. Students can apply for research grants up to \$500 per semester, and often, this \$500 is supplemental to other departmental/college funds for the project. Applications for OSR grants do not prohibit students from applying for other grant opportunities on campus, and each application requires a faculty letter of support to ensure that the student will be mentored to bring the project to completion/success. These funds must be spent within the fiscal year (i.e., funds granted in the fall semester should be spent in the fall semester, while funds granted in the spring semester should be spent in the spring semester).
 2. Travel grants up to \$400 are also available for students that are lead or co-presenters at a conference or event, though splitting the total funds across more than 2 students can be challenging. February and March are typically OSR's busiest months given the number of conferences and events available to students in this time frame each year. Applications for travel grants are due the 15th of every month, and students should apply in the month prior to when they are scheduled to travel. All student travel must be pre-approved in advance within Chrome River/Emburse, and no funds can be disbursed before applicable compliance approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC, etc.) have been obtained.

For undergraduate student travel : is the funding still \$400 if they travel out of state? Answer: Yes, we can give up to \$400 whether it is in state or out of state and even international.

3. OSR sponsors an Undergraduate Research Assistant (URA) program that funds students' work on faculty-led research projects. This is typically one of OSR's most competitive grants, often drawing 40 to 50 applications for 20 available awards. Note that this program comes from a different

funding mechanism than the \$110,000 State budget, and as such, it has a different set of requirements (e.g., project must be faculty- vs. student-led). These awards are available each fall, spring, and summer, and next year, OSR will be rolling out year-long URA awards to support the training/work of a student throughout the entire fall-to-spring academic year.

4. OSR hosts the annual Student Research and Creative Activities event - a multidisciplinary event - every April on the 4th floor of Plemmons Student Union. Any and all students are encouraged to apply and/or attend, but especially those that have received OSR funding. The undergraduate and graduate student poster competitions are the most popular part of the event, requiring three-minute summary presentations from the top 10 posters selected.
5. OSR helps support applications to the UNC System Undergraduate Research Program Award, a pool of \$75,000-\$100,000 available to support undergraduate research proposals. OSR has been successful with two proposals to this program in recent years. Applications for this program are due in April, and as each UNC System university is only permitted to submit one proposal, applications will be subject to internal competition/review.

F. Discussion Points (as pulled from Strategic Plan)

1. How to advocate for/promote student engaged research experiences at the university?
2. How to demonstrate that students - both undergraduate and graduate - engaging in Faculty Mentored research and/or creative activities - is a priority?
3. How to increase institutional funding and support?
 - a) Faculty communication expressing interest, benefits to students, benefits to faculty, etc. important to guarantee continued/increased future funding.
4. How to elevate undergraduate research and student research across campus in general

II. Presentation: Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies - Ashley Colquitt, Dean; Ross Gosky, Associate Dean

- A. Ashley Colquitt is the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. She will have been at Appalachian State for two years in July, and her faculty appointment is in Public Health. Ross Gosky is the Associate Dean in the Graduate School. He has been in the role for three years, and was previously a faculty member in Mathematical Sciences and Statistics.

- B. The Graduate School functions as a hybrid model and performs a combination of decentralized and centralized functions. The Graduate School serves as the hub of all graduate faculty information, maintaining and processing paperwork, student records, academic standing, etc. from the time a graduate student is admitted to when they graduate. The school operates centrally from a funding perspective to support graduate students. Three major areas: (1) the Business and Finance Team that supports graduate assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships, (2) the Registration and Records team that maintains all student records, degree audits/clearance/conferrals, and academic standing, and (3) the Graduate Student Life team that functions like student affairs (e.g., professional development, health and well-being resources, etc.) for graduate students. Note that the hiring of all graduate assistants on campus is processed through the Graduate School, regardless of the source of funding. Though technically under Academic Affairs, the Graduate School is a supporting unit to all other academic colleges and divisions on campus, working closely with enrollment management, business and finance, student affairs, etc. to serve graduate students, graduate faculty, and maintain the quality of our graduate programs.
- C. Mission: The Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies supports the academic and professional development of graduate students by offering a challenging intellectual environment that promotes shared learning and discovery. A supportive graduate faculty advances graduate students' curiosity, passion, and knowledge, engaging students as colleagues and guiding students to become active contributors to knowledge, creativity, and innovation in their disciplines.
- D. Intersections w/ Research
1. The Graduate School focuses on the development of scholars and discovery of new information by providing a variety of funding opportunities to get students involved in research.
 - a) \$2.7 million in funding allocated to graduate assistantships on campus. Most provided to Colleges/Academic Deans to support graduate assistantships for/within their various programs on campus, but funding also provided to ORI and OSR for graduate work within their offices.
 - b) Graduate Research Assistant Mentoring (GRAM) Program, a research mentorship program in which faculty submit a specific research project with which a graduate student can assist. There are typically 22-24 of these projects funded each year, and as the funding level is a bit higher than typical research assistantships, it allows faculty to 'recruit' a student(s) with a specific skill set. Students can be funded up to 2 years with these awards, and awards are typically funded at \$14,000 for fall and spring. Note

that the Graduate School requests a minimum stipend of \$9,500/yr for non-STEM students and \$10,500/yr for STEM students assuming a 20-hr work week throughout the year. Link: <https://graduate.appstate.edu/faculty/faculty-awards-and-funding/gram-program>

- c) There are various donor-based research awards and scholarships to support student and faculty research activities. Awards made/calls placed for these funds in the spring.
- d) Graduate Student Government Association (GSGA) awards and scholarships are funded through student fees and typically total \$19,000. Graduate students can apply for these funds as research or travel grants, and unlike OSR funds, these funds go directly into student accounts rather than through ChromeRiver/Emburse.
- 2. The Graduate School attempts to facilitate collaborations between offices that improve the research experience (i.e., IRB workshops, writing workshops, etc.).
- 3. The Graduate School supports curriculum and shapes policies that require participation in the research enterprise via ‘culminating’ experience projects (e.g., thesis projects, dissertations).
- E. Ross Gosky provided additional comments on GSGA research and travel award funding and GRAM Awards.
 - 1. Seeing increased participation/more applications for GSGA funding given communications/marketing efforts and the post-COVID return to travel.
 - 2. Encouraging more students and faculty to pursue GRAM awards given the recognition provided and their overall contribution to the research enterprise.
- F. Discussion Points (in support of the development of a strategic plan for the Graduate School)
 - 1. How can the Graduate School advocate for your programs at the university level and strengthen their position in the regional university landscape?
 - 2. How could the University demonstrate that graduate education is a key priority?

III. Discussion

- A. As faculty tend to find out that students are interested in research through the grapevine, does OSR have any activities or other ways to identify undergraduates interested in doing research? Answer: OSR previously had a running database to which faculty could contribute, but it wasn’t well-utilized and was eventually eliminated. Now, OSR typically tries to task the students with taking initiative, guiding them to/through department websites, faculty, or department chairs to learn about available opportunities. An upcoming event - the Mountaineer Student

Scholars Exploration (scheduled for May 7th) - will be a good opportunity to start relevant discussions/connections of this nature. The Mountaineer Student Scholar name is meant to both provide an easy way to identify/list student research experiences and create a cohort-style watering hole opportunity. The initial event will be followed by a more formalized, campus-facing event bringing students, mentors, and anyone else interested in student research together this fall.

A link to how students can find a mentor.

<https://osr.appstate.edu/research-opportunities-and-resources>

- B. Justin Cervero posed a question concerning former month's notes - who is the campus point of contact for last month's ORCID conversation? As there may be implications for identity management platforms and third party systems that authenticate from us, who on campus owns the ORCID data/process? Ashlea Green reviewed ROAR, the research organization identifier that may be linked to ORCID, but to date, no one unit or group on campus has maintained a list of all faculty's IDs. Justin indicated that it may be up to ITS to build that for everyone. Charna Howson indicated that the NIH maintains a list currently used to look up any IDs needed, and Ashlea Green added that is has an API that she's used to find App State-affiliated information for before. Justin plans to reach out to Charna and Ashlea for more background information after upcoming FigShare and Shibboleth meetings to proceed.
- C. Can a faculty member still [be] a member for Graduate faculty membership even though we have no graduate program in our department (Applied Design)? Ross Gosky responded that yes, you could still be eligible for graduate faculty membership. Although uncommon if a department doesn't have a graduate program, someone might serve on a thesis committee or be involved in graduate work based on their area of expertise in other ways that would allow them to apply for membership. There are two levels of graduate faculty membership - affiliate and full; affiliate membership is designed for a temporary, three-year rolling basis, whereas full membership is granted to tenure track hires and is assumed to remain in place through subsequent promotion, tenure, and post-tenure reviews. Depending on the department or need, an applicant may be able to opt for affiliate or full membership. Anyone with more specific questions should contact Ross directly.
- D. Karen Fletcher indicated that presentations will be uploaded on the URC's ASULearn site for any future reference.

Old Business

- I. URC grant

- A. Language re: better defining allowable costs to be inclusive of creative arts
1. Panda Powell is drafting sample language to consider

Announcements (5 mins)

- Research podcast now streaming on Spotify: [Research Excellence: Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity](#). First two episodes feature the 2024 Chancellor and Provost awardees for Research Excellence. Areas of Excellence may be featured, as well.
- Office of Student Research - Research Grants and Travel Grants are now open and available due the 15th of each month.
 - Abstracts due for presentations/proposals (Oral and Poster) February 28. Poster Competition for both UG and GR students. Annual Celebration of Student Research and Creative Endeavors - Wednesday, April 16, 2025
 - 4th floor of Student Union.
 - Email OSR (osr@appstate.edu) if you have additional questions.
- Graduate Student (GSGA) Travel and Research grants - March 31st
- Open AIR, App State's new institutional repository (IR), is currently in the staging environment, and **University Libraries would appreciate faculty feedback through Friday, Feb. 21, 2025** on site navigation, search functions, and the file upload/deposit process. (Note: no legacy content from NCDOCKS has migrated to the new IR yet.)
 - Site login details are provided [here](#).
 - Please provide feedback about the site using this anonymous [survey](#).
 - Feel free to reach out with IR-related questions or comments:
 - [Natalie Foreman](#) for outreach, promotion, and general IR inquiries
 - [Agnes Gambill](#) for copyright, licensing, intellectual property, terms and conditions, and related areas
 - [Ashlea Green](#) for metadata/data management, persistent identifiers (e.g., DOIs, ORCID iDs), data/repository standards and best practices, and related areas

Next meeting March 18, 2025, 4:00pm

Adjournment at 4:57.

Motion to adjourn only if there is unfinished business.