University Research Council  
January 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes  
387 John Thomas Hall  
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
Approved

Present: Maryam Ahmed, Rebecca Battista, Gabriele Casale, Elisabeth Cavallaro, Neel Das, Karen Fletcher, Marie Hoepfl, Charna Howson, Alecja Jackson, Ece Karatan, Tammy Kowalczyk, Gary McCullough, Maurice Meilleur, Pam Mitchem, Julia Pedigo, Amy Roberts, Iryna Sharaievska, Caroline Smith, Twila Wingrove

Excused: Robin Tyndall

Absent: Tracy Goodson-Espy

Staff: Kate Hoffman

Call to order – Ece Karatan 4:03 pm

MINUTES: Approval of the November 13, 2018 minutes approved

Brief Announcements

- Office of Research - Ece Karatan

  A handout of the brief announcements will be provided at future meetings so the information can be taken and shared. Tammy Kowalczyk, Interim Director of the Research Institute for Environment, Energy, and Economics has joined the membership. Tammy will give updates at the next meeting. Maryam Ahmed of Biology is now able to attend the meetings from teaching the previous semester.

  A call for agenda items will be sent for next meeting.

- Grants Resources and Services – Karen Fletcher

  Workshop handout includes (register at workshops.appstate.edu):  
  - National Endowment for the Humanities, January 22nd, 12:00 pm, 387 John Thomas Hall
  - Mid-Career, January 28th, 12:00 pm, 387 John Thomas Hall
  - Funding Your Research, January 30th, 10:00 am, 102 Anne Belk Hall
  - URC Grant, February 6th, 1:00 pm, 218 Anne Belk Hall
  - SPIN Research Database Training, February 12th, 10:00 am, 218 Anne Belk Hall

  The Mid-Career workshop illustrates strategies how to move forward on research. The URC Grant workshop explains what is a competitive proposal, how to apply, and the overall process. Karen needs a URC member volunteer willing to come and speak.
A second handout outlines the Spring 2019 URC panels and calendar. Members who are listed as panel chairs, please confirm with Katie Howard acknowledging being a chair for the respective panel listed. Please RSVP to the URC Competition Reviewer training email invitation. Recent changes to the URC process will be disclosed in more detail. Please attend.

- Research Data Analysis – Twila Wingrove

  Workshops include (register at workshops.appstate.edu):
  - How to Use Open Science Practices in Your Research, January 23rd, 10:00 am, 327 Belk
  - How to Do Correlations and Regressions, February 20th, 2:00 pm, 327 Belk
  - How to Do T-tests and ANOVAs, March 20th, 1:00 pm, 327 Belk

- Sponsored Programs - Charna Howson

  Sponsored Programs is now fully staffed. Two individuals, previously departmental admins, have been hired and will be mentored by experienced SP staff. Roxie White is staying, but will be working remotely from Asheville. Department assignments will change and updates will be posted to the website.

  December statistics include proposal submissions are up 420% up at 99 proposals requesting $39.2 million. Awards are 62 each at $8 million which is slightly down. Awards are still being processing. Some may be in limbo due to the federal shutdown. Workshops will be announced at the next meeting as planning is being finalized.

- Student Research – Becki Battista

  Twenty Undergraduate Research Assistantships have been awarded. Next URAs will be awarded in mid-April. Travel grant submissions are due today. OSR is hoping for 200 accepted submissions for the National Conference on Undergraduate Research this year. The deadline to apply is February 19th.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Information on the partial government shutdown of various agencies - Ece Karatan, Charna Howson, Amy Roberts

  Currently in-house grants are alright. SFA has obtained some funding prior to the federal shutdown. If it continues more than a month, a reassessment will be made. NIH and Department of Education appropriations already have already been signed into law with no loss of funding. Per program officers, NIH panels may not be meeting due to the shutdown. NSF is a concern. Some NSF awards are forward funded with money in hand. Others are not. This will be reviewed upon a case by
case basis and information will be communicated to the PIs. Should it become necessary, money will be borrowed from existing funds and used to support the researchers.

All financial systems are operational except for NSF. No one to date is changing any deadline dates. Systems are receiving proposals until government reopens.

2. Changes to URC - Karen Fletcher

Ece, Maurice, Gary, Katie Howard, and Karen discussed small adjustments to the URC process based partially on the feedback from the council after the last round of URC awards. Karen encouraged all reviewers to attend the URC reviewer training the following week to go over the adjustments to the URC review process. URC representatives are encouraged to answer questions from their college colleagues. The URC grant competition is now open to accept applications.

3. Facilities and Administration Cost Policy Discussion - Ece Karatan, Charna Howson, Amy Roberts

Why are Facilities and Administrative dollars so magical?

ASU Policy 220 describes the collection and distribution of the monies. There is a specified rate of 37% by the Department of Health and Human Services. This rate has been improved from the previous rate of 32%. The rate can be re-negotiated every five years.

Returns of F&A receipts are outlined in the policy (F&A Distribution Table). F&A monies do not expire. The majority of F&A comes back to run Office of Research and pay for personnel of SFA and OR. The remainder is put to use for URC grants, IRB, IBC, IACUC chair, software (AGrants/RAMSES, InfoReady, IRC), graduate school award, and start-up funds for colleges. Some decide to only give 5% back to the PI. ASU’s current policy is generous. As F&A receipts increase, Office of Research has a wish list of items to support research on camps: Summer Stipend for Writing A Grant (SWAG), travel grants, and bridge funding.

Office of Research is requesting URC membership input regarding the low dollar levels of the F&A returns. The policy has been in effect for over four years. This is a young policy. There are ways to strategically look at things for it to become productive.

Language in the document covers PI and co-PIs. However, there is a lot of collaborative work. PIs have shared. Special Funds Accounting sets up a fund for each individual, department, institute, center, and college that receives an F&A distribution. Amy Roberts manages 408 of these funds. Is there a point at which small monies are not an incentive and cost more to move these funds around? Is
there a threshold amount to not move the money? F&A distributions are based on what PIs are spending.

Gabe says that the money is important no matter how small and can accumulate over several years to enable purchases and Maryam agrees. Twila explains that this is the only type of money she can utilize to buy a book. Gary states that colleges can use the funds for equipment and suggests maybe the PIs & Colleges receive funds, but not the departments.

Marie asks how the 10% for departments is determined. ASU models this policy after peer institutions that distribute across the board.

Amy relays that the policy is not working and that most of the funds are not being spent. Marie states that the money needs to be used to further develop meaningful research. It is upsetting if it is not used in this manner.

Tammy suggests a collaborative fund for the small amounts of money to strategically fund specific purposes (strategic budgeting). This may be a possible way to circumvent people from spending money on un-needed things. Gary agrees. This is what it should be used for anyway to incentivize and support research. Ece notes that the monies could be kept in a central repository and earmarked for a specific purpose. Charna includes that there could be an option to select to give the money to the central repository, PI, department, college, center, or institute.

Ece asks if there is a procedural requirement for a year-end report. Charna replies that it is covered in the current policy. Section 4.5.2 states a “plan for use may be requested if there is no activity in a fund for a period of one year.”

Maryam notes that transparency is needed about its use. Is there a list on how the money is used? Amy replies that the language is intentionally broad to cover everyone’s research. Marie suggests that a reporting list is required. This might be helpful between the department and college levels to look at it and discuss. Karen states that a form could be implemented through InfoReady. Ece can talk to the Council of Chairs and vet it with the deans. It’s already stated in the policy.

Information will be compiled and shared with you at the next meeting. Ece relays that the membership will be sent a seven question research integrity questionnaire and thanks the members in advance for their responses.

Adjournment – 5:12 pm