

Faculty Research Committee Report for 2011-2012 11/09/2012

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Our mission has been to identify problems and suggest solutions to the research mission of the University. We are advisory to the Dr. Barbara Entwisle, Vice Chancellor of Research. Prior suggestions over the past several years have included institution of Bridge funding for faculty between grants, discussion of in-house sabbaticals to foster interdisciplinary exchange, suggestions for the new Web design constructed by Andy Johns, and mechanisms to formalize in-house grant panels.

For 2011-2012 our discussions centered on communication, interdisciplinary research endeavors and how to foster these interactions across campus.

Communication:

We met with a Journalism group to discuss how to best disseminate information across campus. Endeavors has been one venue and has been completely transferred to an e-pub. We discussed how to get our message to the public and how to better communicate the research goals in general to the public.

Interdisciplinary Research:

We discussed several ways to promote interdisciplinary research. Barbara brought the Small grant program to our attention. The question is whether bigger dollars might provide sufficient incentive to start projects that could lead to even bigger dollars. The committee thought this would be a good idea. The informal consensus was that these monies should not be targeted, rather they should foster basic research initiated from any and all faculty.

Specific topics included:

Compliance:

The University will be dealing with new reporting requirements from the Government, for instance all travel to meetings will need to be documented.

Insurance for Temporary Employees:

New ways are being implemented to deal with temporary employees re: Health insurance (the perennial postdoc problem)

Summary of 2010-2011:

We need to be proactive in enhancing our competitive edge in a climate of reduced grant opportunities. While many units have been doing more or less formal in-house reviews, there was enthusiasm for formalizing this across campus, especially as the interdisciplinary nature of our enterprise expands. We met with Dr. Sohini Sengupta, a Research Coordinator in the Center for Faculty Excellence, who was discussing this idea with other offices and units on campus. The CFE is willing to collaborate. Subsequent steps to implement this idea were discussed.

Looking forward, we have discussed our mission with the new Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr. Barbara Entwistle. A productive use of our expertise could be advisory to the Chancellor. There are new issues

and initiatives on the table that we may be able to provide assistance, advice and importantly perspective from the research side of the University. Our committee supports a more focused mission.

Examples of Agenda Items:

Funding opportunities from industry: educate industry as to our expertise. Allow industry interactions to be considered for tenure.

Build bridges to business school. Liaisons could be built between Business and A&S

Innovation Initiatives: How can we harness critical thinking from the liberal arts into innovative initiatives between industry and academia? The current model has been historically a physical science/public health enterprise. Can we engage the liberal arts, social sciences and humanities in this enterprise in novel ways?