

UM Senate Assembly
Research Policies Committee
Office of the Vice President for Research
Friday, January 11, 2008
10:00-12:00 Noon
4006 Fleming

Minutes

RPC members present: Carl Akerlof, Toni Antonucci (chair), Michael Benson, Stephen Bougher, Robert Frost, Pawan Kumar, Elson Liu, Kazuhiro Saitou, Ray Walling, Elizabeth Young, Weizhen Zhang, Qiang Zhu

RPC members absent: Jerald Bachman, Kyle Goszyk, Kristin Seefeldt, Michael Thouless (SACUA liaison)

OVPR staff present: Judy Nowack, Jim Shayman, Jackie Hoats-Shields (committee staff); **OHRCR staff present:** Ron Maio

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

1. Change of RPC meeting time

Committee Chair Toni Antonucci raised the issue of the meeting time, asking whether the group would be able to meet on scheduled Fridays from 9:00-11:00 a.m., instead of from 10:00-12:00 noon. Those present agreed that this would work. It was therefore agreed that for future RPC meetings this academic year, the meeting time would be 9:00-11:00 a.m. (with a 9:10 call to order).

2. Consideration of minutes from December 14, 2007 RPC meeting

There were no comments or changes requested to the minutes.

Bob Frost: Motioned to approve the minutes as written.

Elizabeth Young: Seconded motion.

Vote: All in favor.

3. Continued discussion of proposed changes to the research tracks

Results from the 1999 ISR diversity survey were distributed. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the working climate with regard to diversity concerns, and there may be some questions similar to what this group is interested in. ISR has agreed to get further analysis done on these results for RPC. The data was collected by an outside company, the same company which has done a similar survey for the Medical School.

The group discussed the ISR survey results. It was noted that many of the items seem intrinsic to the administration of a particular unit and not necessarily relevant to the questions RPC is interested in. Also, different analysis is needed to parse out the responses that represent the pure research scientists.

The group reviewed which questions would be useful to have reanalyzed. Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were identified as having the most relevant points, but it is uncertain whether the data can be broken out for those who are “pure” research scientists. It was also commented that since the current research scientist tracks were not established in 1999 when the ISR survey was done, it would be useful to see how the tracks were constituted in 1999.

The present three categories of faculty were noted:

- Tenure track faculty
- Faculty in a tenure track with secondary research professor appointments
- Faculty with pure research scientist appointments

There are approximately 900 faculty with research scientist appointments of some type, and of those, approximately 600 are “pure.” Further, 2/3 of those 600 are in the Medical School.

The committee discussed the value of doing a new survey to get at issues not previously addressed. It was noted that seeing the Medical School survey may help in design of the new survey.

Another idea generated was to hold a series of focus groups with a sample of research faculty. The focus group results could then be used to shape a broader survey.

The discussion turned to timing and whether an outcome on the issue is expected by the end of academic year. OVPR staff said that a number of discussions with academic units have already been held and will be continued and that the expectation is that a decision on changes to the research scientist track will be made at the end of this academic year. Thus, RPC information by the end of the academic year would be timely.

The group agreed on the following plans:

- Review the Medical School data when available and have it and possibly the ISR data reanalyzed if this seems useful. (Discuss this further at the February meeting if the Medical School data is available.)
- Consider what additional questions may be asked in the new survey.
- Arrange for focus groups to meet in late February or early March. Focus group facilitators may be available through HR; the chair will investigate.
- Form a subcommittee to come up with survey questions and focus group questions.

One thing that OVPR will need is an approximation of the cost of doing a new survey and holding the focus groups.

Volunteers for the subcommittee are: Bob Frost, Jim Shayman, Carl Akerlof, Steven Bougher, and Toni Antonucci. Meetings for the subcommittee will be arranged before the next RPC meeting, and the topic will include planning for the focus groups. It needs to be determined how many to have and who to invite.

One approach would be to have three separate focus groups, inviting faculty from a particular school or cluster of schools, such as one for Medical School, one for non-Medical School, and one for Engineering. Another approach would be to simply hold the focus groups at the various locations (Medical campus, central campus, north campus) and open them each to everyone. The invitation list could be prepared through sampling, with attention paid to the rank of those invited.

The discussion turned to whom to invite as guests for future RPC meetings on this topic. OVPR will be able to identify who they have already talked with; for example their audience has been the current executive committees and deans. RPC would like to hear about the impressions gained from talking with these individuals.

Ideas for invitees included:

- David Bloom, formerly associate dean in the Medical School
- A chair or member of the medical school appointments and promotions committee
- Margaret Gyetko, associate dean for faculty affairs, Medical School
- Jayne Thorson, associate dean for faculty affairs, Medical School
- Teresa Sullivan, provost and executive VP for academic affairs
- Homer Neal, professor, and former president and VP for Research (at the time of implementation of the RS tracks in the 1990's)

It was agreed that since the Medical School data is under discussion, Jayne Thorson and Margaret Gyetko would be invited to the next meeting.

4. New business and additional issues from the committee

Ideas were brought up for other topics to discuss over the year:

- Data archiving issues and the resulting recommendations from RPC in 2006-2007. The recommendations will be distributed for the next meeting.
- eResearch. In operation since the summer of 2005, eResearch is one of the topics of a recent survey by OHRCR, directed by Ron Maio. Other human subjects issues will also be of interest to the group, and Judy Nowack can report on these topics at a future meeting.
- Regental policy on restrictions on openness. The annual report on the implementation of the Regental Research Policy will be brought forward to RPC as usual. Discussion of export control regulations might also be combined with this topic.

The next RPC meeting will be Friday, February 8, 2008, starting at 9:10 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.