

Faculty Senate Research Committee

Annual Report, 2016-2017 Term

Agenda items addressed during the 2016-2017 Faculty Senate term (in approximate end priority order)

1. Opening communication with Associate Deans of Research and the VP-Research office
- 2a. Concerns regarding evaluation of research and scholarship, including impact on retention and morale
- 2b. Research incentives in the comprehensive plan (VPR Karanfil; BOT Liason Mefford; VPFA Granberg)
3. InfoED and shared research resources; concern re: iThenticate
4. Responsibilities for PIs leaving the University (Lab close-out)
5. University committees: IP Intellectual Property; COI policy; Research Safety Task Force

Accomplishments of the 2016-17 Academic year:

1. Revision of the Research Council into the Research Advisory Board
2. Edits/revisions to Faculty Manual, Section F
3. **Small Restricted Receipt's**

Items carried over from previous year, but not discussed at length (notes carried over from 2015-16):

1. Clemson University-State of SC regulations [this topic developed as an actionable item addressing two previously separated items: dependency travel COFAR (COFAR supercircular) and NSF ADVANCE]
2. HR items: hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students); postdoc hiring Hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students)

Research committee members: members present indicated with *

	College	Aug. 23	Sept. 20	Oct. 18	Nov. 1	Dec. 7	Jan. 24	Feb. 21	Mar. 7	Apr. 4
Schmalz, Dorothy (chair)	BSHS	*	*	*		*	*	*		*
Falta, Ron	ECAS	*	*	*		*		*		*
Husson, Scott	ECAS	*	*	*	CXL'd	*	*	*	CXL'd	
Lawton-Rauh, Amy	Science	@DImtg	*	*			*	*		*
Luo, Hong	Science			*			*	*		*
Mai, Joe	AAH									
Spitler, Hugh	BSHS	*	*	*		*	*	*		*

Special guests: Tanju Karanfil (VP Research), Ellen Granberg (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs), Tracy Arwood (Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance & Research Integrity Officer), Thompson Mefford (Faculty Liaison to the Board of Trustees), Associate Deans of Research: Muth (CoB/BSHS), Temesvari (CoS), Spencer (AAH), Culin (AFLS), Barrett (CoE), [Hirt (CoECAS) unable to attend].

1). Opening communication with Associate Deans of Research and the VP-Research

Issue: The committee agreed and having the ADRs plus VP-Research Karanfil attend meetings at regular intervals to maintain communication is desirable.

Conclusion: VP-Research Karanfil attended a meeting each semester during the 2016-17 academic year and was highly amenable to joining regularly. We consider this pattern well-established, and both parties on board. At least during VPR Karanfil's tenure, the Research Committee is satisfied with this being achieved.

Associate Dean's of Research attended the April meeting, and were also highly amenable to joining forces with the Research Committee.

Recommendations for 2017-18:

Maintain communication with each of these contacts. Having VPR Karanfil at regular intervals will be advantageous in keeping a sense of what is going on in that office, and at the very least, keep the impression that faculty have a say in what is being done; how and why. (See the example provided of how the Research Committee can play an important role in this regard.)

Meeting with the ADR's of the

colleges also proved to be an enlightening and valuable process. They have more of a sense of the decisions that are being made, and as proverbial "middle-men" are great resources for learning about the goings on at the next level.

Example:**Concerns Regarding the Role of Administrative offices in determining efficacy of grants**

Issue: In September 2016, the Research Committee learned that the submission of some Federal grants by faculty were deemed uncompetitive at the VPR's office and were denied the approval for submission.

Conclusion: This proved to be an issue of the VPR office overstepping, and VPR Karanfil accepted responsibility for the mistake. Considers it a lesson learned in his role as VPR.

2a/b.) Concerns regarding evaluation of research and scholarship, including impact on retention and morale Research incentives in the comprehensive plan

Issue: Several concerns related to recognition for evaluation of research and scholarly excellence and efforts have been brought to the attention of the committee, off and on, since May 2014. Most of these concerns suggest perceived inconsistencies and balance at department and/or College levels and center on annual evaluations, especially as these relate to workload distribution and salary increases.

Discussion: In 2015-16, Senator Tong (CECAS) drafted an 'Evaluation' document to facilitate discussion.

Committee discussions indicate that the purposes and procedures for annual reviews and for TPR reviews may be getting blurred. Thus, it is unclear that an 'Evaluation' guideline document publication is the best route for addressing this concern. The committee met with Karanfil, Granberg, and Mefford at different points during the semester to address this issue.

Recommendations for 2017-18: Stay on top of how

the administration uses this system. ADR's

expressed concern that there is no transparency in how it is being rolled out, and that there was no consultation with faculty regarding use of this program. In addition, there is inconsistency between the way the use of the system is being marketed, and how it appears it is being used; on the one hand, administration says it's not being used to assess individual faculty, but on the other hand,

administration confirm that it is being used to determine who should be recognized by the Provost for success in scholarship. Thompson Mefford and

Ellen Granberg insist that this is one method of overcoming favoritism by mid-level administration (Dept. Heads & Deans) by provided data on the productivity of faculty who might not be appreciated.

Academic Analytics:

Issue: In the Committee meeting on February 21, Dr. Thompson Mefford (Faculty liaison to the Board of Trustees), it came to light that University administration is using "Academic Analytics" to assess scholarly productivity (<http://www.clemson.edu/assessment/academic-analytics/redsfaq.html>). Some Senators had heard of shortcomings to the software, and thus raised concern on the Senate. In April 2017, President Kurz welcomed Jeremy King to review the program with the Executive Advisory Committee.

3). InfoED and shared research resources; concern re: iThenticate

Issue: Revised guidelines for federally funded research are phasing in at Clemson (all Universities, institutes, etc.) (started: January 2015). The COFAR Supercircular document (<https://cfo.gov/cofar/>). Goal for Supercircular is to reduce duplication, and streamline administrative support to cut administrative burden on PI's. The system is also meant to help better track expenditures and project performance for reports to Federal agencies and other funding groups. OSP is looking into how to overcome difficulties with developing 'boilerplate' documents to assist proposal and report documents (example: facilities and equipment descriptions).

Discussion: Boiler plate documents... what can be done to get these? Can we get around the concern about

plagiarism and similarity checking? From a compliance standpoint, these documents should be possible to create and distribute because the system used for cross-checking documents for plagiarism (iThenticate) operates like TurnItIn where similarities are revealed but always checked by personnel. Tracy Arwood researched this concern with NSF and NIH, determining that there are policies in place with these organizations that ensure shared resource boiler plate documents are not a problem with the iThenticate system. In conferring with these organizations, Tracy confirmed that although the system will catch verbiage in the template as similar, human review of the reports will confirm that they are templates and thus not an issue.

4.) Responsibilities for PIs leaving the University (Lab close-out)

Issue: During the 2015-16 Academic year, the Research Committee sought details from the Office of Sponsored Programs regarding University policy for Lab – close outs in the case of research faculty having to leave labs under unexpected circumstances. Roberta Elrod and Tracy Arwood were invited to discuss the procedures, and indicated that there are policies in place to address this problem. The issue is more a matter of faculty not knowing that there are procedures and therefore not following them, than there not being any at all.

Discussion: In December 2016, the Committee discussed this problem with Tracy Arwood again, who explained that procedures are being followed well in the CEACS. However, it involves collaboration with OSP, and withholding funding/awards to departments until Labs are correctly closed out.

5.) University Committees:

The Faculty Senate is represented directly on the ‘Intellectual Property’ committee and the ‘COI Policy’ committee. Sen. Lawton-Rauh served as the representative on the IP committee, and Sen. Husson was the representative on the COI Committee. The Committee also received reports from the newly established Research Safety Task Force, on which Sen. Lawton-Rauh serves.

Intellectual Property (IP) met in May 2016. Changes were made to the Copyright policies for academic scholarship. Senator Husson presented the changes in detail, and the committee agreed that they represent the best interests of the faculty. We therefore approved the changes and have informed Joe Culin (chair of the committee) accordingly. The committee did not meet again during the academic year.

Conflict of Interest (CoI) Committee met during summer 2016. Concluded that the previous form/survey that faculty were required to complete did not meet the needs; there were too many ways of interpreting the questions, and instances of CoI were not captured. Therefore, the survey is being re-created, and people will be asked to complete it again. The committee did not meet again during the academic year.

Research Safety Task Force was established in response to the APLU’s interest in addressing issues of Research Safety (<http://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/News/a-call-to-action-aplu-task-force-on-laboratory-safety-releases-report--guidelines-urging-all-universities-to-renew-commitment-to-research-safety>). Amy Lawton-Rauh explained that the goal of the committee is to assess the perception of safety in research labs across the state. The task force aims to have data on this by summer 2017.

Committee Accomplishments, 2016-17:

1.) Revision of the Research Council into the Research Advisory Board

Issue: VP-Research proposed the introduction of a Research Advisory Board in lieu of the Research Council which was virtually dysfunctional due to size.

Conclusion: The committee worked with VPR Karanfil on the Faculty Manual language for the new RAB, and this was passed by Senate at the October meeting, 2016.

2.) Edits/revisions to Faculty Manual, Section F

Issue: President Kurz determined that Section F of the Faculty Manual included a number of superfluous committees that did not involve faculty governance, and therefore did not need to be in the Faculty Manual. The Research Committee was assigned all research related committees in this section, and assigned the task of reviewing them and whether they need be in the Manual. The committee made necessary edits and revisions accordingly; the changes were passed by the Senate at the October meeting, 2016.

3). Small Restricted Receipt's

Issue: Non-Federal grants and funds below a certain level have different restrictions vs. funds above this line. This may be causing some PI's to decline small funded projects or decreasing the amounts accepted in order to minimize administrative burdens

Items carried over from previous year, but not discussed at length (notes carried over from 2015-16):

1). Clemson University-State of SC regulations [this topic developed as an actionable item addressing two previously separated items: dependency travel COFAR (COFAR supercircular) and NSF ADVANCE]

Issue: The issue regarding expenses or items permitted by Federal agencies when allowable by an institution was first raised when reviewing the COFAR supercircular. A recently-submitted and pending NSF proposal focused on mechanisms providing supportive activities and infrastructure for women in STEM research fields brought up this same issue (the committee provided cross-institutional research data from other Land Grant Universities that do not have this restriction). The constraint is that the University must follow the State of South Carolina regulations for state employees and institutional operations. Sometimes, such regulations can be requested to be exempt for the University. The committee wants to know if such exemptions are being discussed and if the limitations of strategic regulations that prevent the University from addressing critical, inclusiveness needs are being discussed. This is a recruitment, diversity, and retention issue and may limit research excellence.

Results: Dr. Granberg will inquire and the committee will connect again on this subject, with a focus on where/with whom interpretations of relevant regulations can be discussed and clarified.

2). HR items: hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students); postdoc hiring Hiring international scholars (postdoctoral scholars and graduate students)

Issue: The hiring process for research scientists (especially international scholars) needs to be clarified and simplified for to enhance professionalism in recruitment and hiring. The Committee requested a University-wide procedure that is clear, accessible and efficient for the PI, support staff, and the scholar that is being recruited. New Human Resources International Employee link was sent to the committee 1.September: <http://www.clemson.edu/employment/international/index.html>. The committee suggested the following to improve the visibility of the site, as well as lead to longevity towards future adaptation to changes. 1.) Market and troubleshooting data: Are data being gathered to be used as follow-up to identify fail points, steps that trip people up, lead to difficulties? Is it possible to track different categories in order to determine if some categories are more effective at communicating for their target group vs others? 2.) Are there plans to make this page link more obviously to the Office of Global Engagement or International Services sites? These other two sites could be easily confused as THE initial important portal for obtaining information. One example that we found is in the International Services page... where Students and Scholars are listed, but there is very little info for scholars and there is no definition of 'student' and 'scholar' (included screenshot). Perhaps adding a direct and obvious button taking people straight to the new site would help? 3.) Can a link be added to the 'A-Z' pages for Graduate students, Staff and Faculty pages, the Office of Global Engagement page, and the International Services page (<http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ia/services/students/>) because our test drive indicated difficulty in locating the best portal for access?

Hiring postdoctoral research scholars

Issue: These benefits went into effect on January 1, 2015. The post-doc leave benefits are included in the overall University leave policy and the HR office finalized a summary document and the Faculty Senate office distributed this summary to all faculty across campus. There is room for improvement to make sure hiring is not delayed.

Combined Results: Additional follow-up for both of these items is needed. HR has been invited to a committee meeting. Suggestion is to try to meet during summer. Also, the committee will find out if there are new personnel recently put in place that can be contacted and then invited to a committee meeting.