

RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL

Minutes of 11 May 2023

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research Policies Council was called to order at 2:33 p.m. on 11 May 2023, via Webex video conferencing by Andre Venter, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Martha Councell-Vargas, Angela Groves, Wanda Hadley, Julian Vasquez Heilig, Kristina Lemmer, Daria Orlowska, Selim Ozyurek (substitute for Lori Brown), Remzi Seker, Andre Venter

Members Absent: Paul Solomon, Kevin Wanner

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio, Mark Hurwitz

Guest: Bonnie Gabriel, Business Manager Associate, Research and Innovation

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Hadley, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

An amendment under Reports of Council/committee Standing Committees was made to “Thirty-three proposals were submitted. Fourteen were recommended for funding without reservations by the panels. Four of six creative arts, one of seven qualitative scholarly, and eight of 20 quantitative sciences were recommended for funding”.

[MOTION] It was moved by Hurwitz, seconded by DeFulio, to approve the minutes of 11 April 2023 as amended. With one abstention, the motion carried.

Reports of Officers

Chair Venter commended Hadley for a feature on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) for her work with students with disabilities.

Ex Officio DeFulio reported approval of the alternating meeting schedule, with September as the next in-person meeting. Members were encouraged to volunteer for secretary, or an appointment will be made during the next meeting. DeFulio reported on vacancies for the College of Arts and Sciences and members at large, and to send nominations.

Reports of the University Representative

Seker reported that the third quarter is looking strong, with proposal submissions maintaining a good trajectory. The Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) is working on:

1. Research Strategic Plan
2. Tactics and metrics to help advance/support research on campus
3. Patents

Seker reported that two large proposals totaling \$1.8 million were filled and acknowledged the dedication of the ORI staff for helping with the short turnaround. Seker congratulated everyone who attended the Spring Convocation and those awarded the Presidential Innovation Professorship.

Gabriel provided a report on the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF)

1. Faculty Research and Creative Activities Awards (FRACAA) will be distributed in June.
2. Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) number of applications is less; however, the total award value is tracking close to pre-COVID totals.
3. Several FRTF awards for FRACAA reviewers remain from last year
4. Preparation and Publication of Papers and Exhibition (PPP&E) has a balance left, and the number of applications is less than pre-COVID.
5. Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) has no change, as it is completed.
6. Suggested setting FRTF and PPP&E maximum amounts for those traveling in July and August.

Hurwitz led a conversation about funding:

1. Pre-COVID, FRACASF allocation was \$475,000, which was cut to \$300,000 during COVID.
2. Average application numbers for the past year (15 for FRACAA, 150 for FRTF, 40 for PPP&E, and 10 for SFSA)
3. Proposed the following limits on the grants:
 - a. FRACAA from \$15,000 down to \$7,579 (limit one per person)
 - b. FRTF from \$2,500 down to \$947 (limit two per person)
 - c. PPP&E from \$2,000 down to \$553 (limit one per person)
 - d. SFSA from \$3,000 down to \$2,211 (limit one per person).

Discussion was held regarding allocation increases to pre-COVID \$450,000, if fewer awards should be funded for a higher amount, and how FRTF should be handled between now and the next meeting. The decision was made to allow July and August faculty travelers to use \$2,500 until the committee meets again to discuss changes in award amounts in October.

Byrd-Jacobs reported that the All-University Research and Creative Scholar Awards had a reception on 17 April. Four Doctoral Scholar Awards, each receiving two years of funding, were funded. WMed Research and Creative Activities Poster Presentation Day had four posters from WMU. Two students from Biology received awards for basic science education. Byrd-Jacobs will be acting as Principal Investigator on the Sloan Foundation proposal. Sloan Center for Systemic Change to increase diversity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Hurwitz presented the annual FRACAA report. FRACAA increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000, the first time since 2018. This resulted in expending our surplus. There were 33 proposals received, up from 23 last year. Each panelist evaluated five to six proposals. The panelists came together for collective funding recommendations. Based on this, 14 proposals were recommended for funding without reservation, and 13 were funded. There was a discussion about providing increased funding for assistant professors to better support pre-tenure colleagues. A discussion was held regarding reinstating the Research Screening meeting.

Hurwitz led a discussion about lack of dean signoff on FRACAA application. Dean did not sign off because emails were being routed to the spam folder. Suggestion to change the application form to allow for Yes/No response for both the dean and chair, where a lack of response defaults to "Yes".

[MOTION] It was moved by Hurwitz, seconded by Seker to fund the application in question. With one opposition and one abstention, the motion carried.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Seker, to reallocate funds remaining in SFSA and will be left over in PPP&E to fund this proposal. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

A motion was made to approve the Research Policy Council annual report as amended.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Seker, to approve RPC annual report as amended. With one abstention, the motion carried.

New Business

None.

Announcements

Chair Venter thanked RPC members for cycling off for their service.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Seker, seconded by Hadley, to adjourn the meeting at 4:28 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research Policies Council will meet next in September, with the date to be determined over the summer.

Approval

Submitted by Daria Orłowska, University Libraries Representative.

Minutes approved on 14 September 2023.