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**RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL**

Minutes of 11 April 2024

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research Policies Council was called to order at 2:30 p.m. on 11 April 2024 via Webex teleconferencing by Andre Venter, chair.

**Members in Attendance:** Onur Arugaslan, Carrie Barrett (substitute for Alessandro Santos), Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Christopher Cheatham, Lofton Durham (substitute for Paul Solomon), Angela Groves, Wanda Hadley, Daria Orlowska, Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Leslie Solares, Christine Stamper (substitute for Remzi Seker), Julian Vasquez Heilig, Andre Venter, Kevin Wanner

**Members Absent:** Bilinda Straight

**Ex Officio in Attendance:** Anthony DeFulio, Mark Hurwitz

**Guests:** Joanne Mih, Office of Research and Innovation

**Quorum**

A quorum was present with 17 members in attendance, of the 10 needed to establish a quorum.

**Agenda**

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

**Minutes**

Approval of the 14 March 2024 minutes was postponed to the 9 May meeting.

Arugaslan attended the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Ex Officio DeFulio joined the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

**Reports of Officers**

Chair Venter did not provide a report.

Ex Officio DeFulio did not provide a report.

**Reports of University Representative**

Stamper, on behalf of Seker, provided the following updates on the FY2024 funding:

1. 152 FRTF applications were funded, resulting in \$171,226.65 spent
2. 39 Preparation and Publication of Papers and Exhibition (PPP&E) applications were funded, resulting in \$26,154.97 spent
3. Eight Support for Faculty Scholars Awards (SFSA) were funded, resulting in \$15,148 spent

A question was asked regarding the original FRTF budget of \$52,049. The amount of \$72,114.25 is the remainder from the \$243,341.00 budget supplemented by ORI/Office of the President.

Vasquez Heilig joined the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Byrd-Jacobs reported on the first Research Week on campus and is looking forward to carrying that momentum into next year. The 17th Annual Research and Creative Activities Graduate Student Poster Day took place earlier today at Waldo Library. Thirty-nine students presented their posters. The RPC committee members who took the time to serve as judges were commended. Twenty students received awards of \$200, which were deposited into their accounts. The Graduate College also awarded a number of scholarships. The Graduate Studies Council awarded seven All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Awards and five All-University Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Awards. Nominations

for both programs are sought on an annual basis by the Graduate College, with each department or unit nominating one student for each of the awards. In addition, the Dissertation Completion Fellowship, which funds WMU doctoral students for up to one year, was able to fund six out of 18 applications received. Finally, four incoming, high-achieving students out of the 25 nominations received two years of funding as part of the Doctoral Scholars Program.

Durham attended the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Vasquez Heilig did not provide a report.

### **Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees**

Ex Officio Hurwitz reported the following on the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRAACA), which has been completed:

1. The competition launched at the end of November, with 39 applications (up from previous years).
2. Twenty-five applications came in from quantitative fields (consisting of four judging panels), nine applications came in from qualitative fields (consisting of two judging panels), and five applications came in from the creative arts (consisting of one judging panel).
3. Panels met and came up with recommendations. Panel application rankings were added this year to distinguish between and among proposals.
4. Twenty out of 39 proposals were ranked to be funded without reservations, however FRACAA only has the budget to fund ten proposals. Ex Officio Hurwitz provided suggestions on how the committee might make the decision, first from the top ranking without reservation applications across panels (most of these researchers have not received prior FRACAA funding), followed by applications of lower ranking without reservation for junior faculty without prior FRACAA funding.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by Hurwitz, seconded by DeFulio, to approve the funding of the ten applications as outlined above. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Unfinished Business**

Chair Venter reported that the MOA 24/02 *Faculty Research Travel Fund* was returned to RPC due to concerns expressed by faculty. MOA 24/02 will be presented back to the Faculty Senate in the 2024-25 academic year. MOA 24/02 remains unfinished.

Durham left the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

### **New Business**

Chair Venter reported that a decision on how FRAACA funds will be distributed in 2024-25 is needed. There is a need to protect FRACAA funding for next year, or potentially even increase funding, given that this award has a large return on investment (15 times return on awards) and supports junior faculty. Ex Officio DeFulio explained that there is no MOA in place for dividing the funding, and will not receive any backfill from the administration. Currently, procedures will operate under a "first come first serve" basis, with limits to awards. Alternate options include, in the absence of any distribution plan, having a moratorium on travel funding and distributing funds across the rest of the buckets; hold off on funding until the end of the year (however, there is no precedent for this type of distribution); defer to the Faculty Senate Executive Board to decide on FRAACA distribution.

PPP&E currently has approximately \$20,000 in unspent money that will roll over within that allocation. The FRTF applications in the past 6 years were 230, 283, 299, 301, 320, 299. As of today, there are 167 FRTF applications. Eighteen will be traveling in June, bringing the number to 185 for this fiscal year.

Cheatham joined the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Wanner, to recommend dividing funding as such: \$100,000 for FRACAA, \$20,000 for PPP&E (not including rollover), \$20,000 for SFSA, and \$160,000 for FRTF. The motion carried unanimously.  
The PPP&E limits for the previous year were \$1,000, with an average request of \$655.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Barrett, to recommend limits for funds as such: \$10,000 for FRACAA, \$1,000 for PPP&E, \$2,000 for SFSA, and \$700 for FRTF. The motion carried.

Chair Venter reported that the RPC 2023-24 Annual Report was distributed and to send edits as soon as possible. The report will be finalized at the May RPC meeting.

Chair Venter reported that Charge 1 has not been completed and will continue to be a priority. Chair Venter asked for proposed charges. Ex Officio DeFulio recommended addressing whether the institutional biosafety committee should fall under the purview of the RPC.

The lack of nominations resulted in postponing the election of RPC 2024-25 officers until the May meeting. New members will join those transitioning off RPC.

Chair Venter suggested postponing the vote on RPC 2024-25 meeting modality until the May meeting.

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Orlowska, to change RPC May 2024 meeting mode from in-person to virtual. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Announcements**

None.

#### **Adjournment**

**[MOTION]** It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Ozyurek, to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research Policies Council will meet next on 9 May 2024 at 2:30 p.m. via Webex teleconferencing.

#### **Approval**

Submitted by Daria Orlowska, Secretary

Minutes approved on 9 May 2024.