
RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL

Minutes of 12 September 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 12 September 2024 in Walwood Commons Bertha Davis Room 111W by Andre Venter, chair.

Members in Attendance: Mert Atilhan, Carrie Barrett (substitute for Alessandro Santos), Patrick Bennett, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Christopher Cheatham, Angela Groves, Wanda Hadley, Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Remzi Seker, Andre Venter

Members Absent: Onur Arugaslan, Amy Bocko, Lofton Durham, Kevin Wanner

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio

Guests: Amy Naugle, WMU Faculty Senate President, Christine Stamper, Office of Research and Innovation

Quorum

A quorum was present, with 13 members in attendance, of the 11 needed to establish one.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Byrd-Jacobs, seconded by Seker, to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Atilhan, seconded by Barrett, to approve the 9 May 2024 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

President Naugle presented the 2024-25 Research Policies Council charges.

Chair Venter reported that he will be present at the 3 October Faculty Senate meeting. The presentation will include RPC's 2023-24 work and current charges.

Ex Officio DeFulio reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Board worked on the Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) distribution Memorandum of Action 24/02 over the summer, but the work was obviated by the arbitration between the union and the administration regarding the FRTF.

Reports of University Representatives

Seker reported the following:

1. In the prior year, WMU was awarded \$59.6M in external grants and contracts, with \$42.1M spent, both records that broke records set in the prior year.
2. Nineteen patents were filed.
3. Budgetary status of the four funds relative to their allocations as set last April by RPC follows (Allocated/Spent):
 - a. Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACAA) - \$100,000/0
 - b. FRTF - \$160,000/\$12,000
 - c. Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works (PPPE) - \$20,000/\$2,000
 - d. Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) - \$20,000/0

Byrd-Jacobs reported the following:

1. Enrollment is up, graduate enrollment is 21% of total enrollment, a larger number than three years ago.

2. A graduate student survey was conducted over the summer, which yielded 673 respondents of about 3,500 students. Full description will be provided later, but 92% are proud of their degree, and 9% said no.
3. Graduate College strategic plan is near completion and will be rolled out over the year.
4. Digital marketing grants will come to fruition with advertisements in October.

Cheatham reported returns, and new student enrollment is up, with overall enrollment and credit hours relatively stable. Retention is up for all classes. Retention rate is 81%, the highest ever at WMU.

Smith attended the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Chair Venter will also be the Ex Officio who serves as FRACAA liaison with the Research Screening Committee for FRACAA.

New Business

Byrd-Jacobs noted that the Graduate Student Association is operational and should be assigning an RPC member soon. The Graduate College is prepared to identify a member, if necessary. Chair Venter suggested that undergraduates also be given a voice at the meeting.

[MOTION] It was moved by Ozyurek, seconded by DeFulio, to recommend to the Faculty Senate Executive Board that the bylaws be changed to include one undergraduate and one graduate student representative to the RPC instead of the current requirement to seat two graduate students and no undergraduate student. The motion carried unanimously.

Ex Officio DeFulio led a discussion about prioritizing Charge #3 and how RPC should address 2024-25 charges as a whole group rather than dividing into subgroups as done in the past year.

Unfinished Business

Seker reported on the arbitration regarding faculty travel. A motion was made to bring RPC recommendations in line with the arbitration decision.

[MOTION] It was moved by Ex Officio DeFulio, seconded by Seker, to revise the FRTF cap from \$700 per trip to \$800 per trip and to retroactively apply to all applications for the current fiscal year. The motion carried unanimously.

[MOTION] It was moved by Ex Officio DeFulio, seconded by Atilhan, that the Office of Research and Innovation hold all requests for support of second trips until the end of the fiscal year, divide any available funds equally across all applicants, and include similar language in the Memorandum of Action (MOA) that will arise from Charge #3. The motion carried unanimously.

Stamper noted that there is no policy guidance regarding how to allocate support for travel that spans the fiscal year (i.e., begins prior to 1 July, but ends on or after 1 July of a given year) and asked RPC to consider addressing this as part of Charge #3. Discussion was held regarding the MOA on FRTF created during the previous academic year. RPC agreed that a single MOA be created to describe policy for all four funds (FRACAA, SFSA, FRTF, and PPP&E).

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Seker, seconded by Venter, to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research Policies Council will meet next on 10 October 2024 at 2:30 p.m. in-person at the Walwood Commons Bertha Davis Room 111W.

Approval

Submitted by Wanda Hadley, substitute for Jesse Smith, Secretary

Minutes approved on 10 October 2024.