
RESEARCH POLICIES COUNCIL

Minutes of 14 November 2024

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Research Policies Council was called to order at 2:38 p.m. on 14 November 2024 in Walwood Commons Bertha Davis Room 111W by Andre Venter, chair.

Members in Attendance: Onur Arugaslan, Mert Atilhan, Carrie Barrett, Christopher Cheatham (substitute for Julian Vasquez Heilig), Wanda Hadley, Selim Ozyurek, Jesse Smith, Bilinda Straight, Christine Stamper (substitute for Remzi Seker), Andre Venter

Members Absent: Patrick Bennett, Amy Bocko, Christine Byrd-Jacobs, Lofton Durham, Angela Groves, Michael Osei, Kevin Wanner

Ex Officio in Attendance: Anthony DeFulio

Quorum

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

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Straight, to approve the 10 October 2024 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Arugaslan joined the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Reports of Officers

Chair Venter reported that seven Support for Faculty Scholars Award (SFSA) have been submitted and five are in draft stage so far, with the deadline of midnight 30 November. Chair Venter is concerned about submission deadlines for external grants being ineffective because of when the budgets are approved. Sometimes, the budget was still being reviewed and approved before the deadline to upload ancillary documents to the funding agency. Chair Venter suggested that the deadline for submissions should be moved to an earlier date. This prompted discussion about deadlines for funding, which do not always align well with the amount of time committees have to review applications.

Ex Officio DeFulio commented on the issue with graduate student representatives of the RPC never attending RPC meetings. He also commented that in the future, the RPC will have not two graduate student representatives, but one graduate and one undergraduate representative, and they need to be encouraged to attend the meetings.

Ex Officio DeFulio stated that, regarding a recent constitutional amendment made by the Faculty Senate, the Research Policies Council will be renamed the Research and Creative Scholarship Council. There was discussion about the implications of this change, including a comment that the RPC will maintain its charge of conducting policy, despite the word "policy" being removed from the official name of the council.

Reports of University Representatives

Stamper reported the following:

1. The Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) approved 53 applications. There is a remaining balance of \$117,749 after \$42,250.85 awarded.

2. The Publication of Papers and Exhibition of Creative Works (PPPE) approved seven applications. There is a remaining balance of \$16,579 after \$3,421 awarded.
3. Across all four funding sources, 60 applications were approved. There is a remaining balance of \$254,328.15 of the \$300,000 budget.

Cheatham commented on experience-driven learning grants, which are part of the Empowering Futures Gift. An announcement for the second round of submissions for these applications will be forthcoming in a couple of weeks and will likely be announced on WMU News and other outlets.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

None.

Unfinished Business

Chair Venter suggested that the RPC discuss the Memorandum of Action (MOA) draft regarding Charge 3. There was discussion about the wording the council wants to use in developing an MOA that incorporates the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund Programs into a single document.

[MOTION] It was moved by Straight, seconded by Arugaslan, to approve the MOA regarding Charge 3 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Venter raised the issue of finalizing the surcharges of Charge 2, Dual Use Research Concern Policy MOA16/12, Recombinant or Synthetic DNA Biosafety Policy 17-50.7, Recovery of Facilities and Administrative Costs MOA 04/06, and WMU Research Acceleration Program Policy 17-02.4. After discussion, the RPC agreed that no action is required on these at present, and that the RPC will follow up at a future date.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, and seconded by Barrett, that the RPC, in finalizing surcharges 1, 3, and 4 of Charge 2, no action was needed at this time. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Chair Venter proposed that the RPC consider changing the names of all four funding awards because the names and the initialisms currently used for the awards can be confusing and do not match well with the kinds of activities they fund. It was suggested that the existing names are too long and that the RPC should consider developing new names with shorter abbreviations that better represent the kinds of activities they fund. There was a question about how the RPC is implementing such a change because the current names for the four funding sources are used in the AAUP contract, by the Faculty Senate, and across university websites, so the implications of name changes need to be considered.

After discussion, there was consensus that the RPC should develop new names for all four awards, and that this needs to be reflected in a draft MOA for consideration by the Faculty Senate. There was further discussion and brainstorming about possible name changes. Examples of these possibilities are listed below. However, it was also suggested by chair Venter that RPC take additional time in deciding what new names will be proposed in the MOA.

1. SFSA could be renamed the Scholarship Development Fund (SFD), or the Scholarly Impact Fund (SIF);
2. PPP&E could be renamed the Scholarship Production Award (SPA), or the Final Works Costs Fund (FWCF);
3. FRTF could be renamed the Faculty Travel Fund (FTF) or Scholarship Dissemination Travel Award (SDTA);
4. FRACCA could be renamed the Scholarship Development Fund (SDF), or ASPIRE, was suggested standing for Award for Scholarship, Performance, Innovation, or Research Excellence (or E for External Funding)

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, and seconded by Straight, that the RPC approve renaming the four funding sources, with the exact names to be discussed at the 9 January 2025 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by DeFulio, seconded by Atilhan, to adjourn the meeting at 3:38 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The Research Policies Council will meet next on 5 December 2024 at 2:30 p.m. in person in Walwood Commons Bertha Davis Room 111W.

Approval

Submitted by Jesse Smith, Secretary

Minutes approved on 9 January 2025.