

Faculty Senate Research Planning and Policy Committee

Charge:

“Reviews issues of long term and short term importance to the ISU research efforts. Serves as the advisory committee to the vice president for research and economic development (VPR/ED), and prepares reports and recommendations on items of importance to the faculty and/or the VPR/ED.”

February 26, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Julia Badenhope, Shui-zhang Fei, Chris Minion, Sridhar Ramaswami, Chris Seeger, Peter Martin, Jorgen Johansen, Sarah Nusser.

Call to Order

Ramaswami made a brief presentation concerning strategies for connecting campus researchers to private sponsors, using established websites that solicit proposals for challenges identified by these non-governmental sponsors. Ramaswami pointed out that the challenges are driven by industry timelines rather than academic timelines, which might pose some logistical challenges for planning. The committee noted the awards level was potentially less than adequate to support full faculty and staff involvement, but that the process might be very useful to support innovative graduate level projects. They might also catalyze relationships and dialogues among researchers by providing 15-50 K in “seed money” to pursue a new idea or direction in applied research. Ramaswami and other members of the committee also noted that intellectual property should be considered in light of the crowd-sourced research approach commonly used in these venues and ISU policy. Committee members also asked about potential incentives to engage faculty and grad students in industry-sponsored projects, which might involve small but meaningful individual or departmental rewards. Ramaswami will follow up after further investigation with a report at the April RPP meeting. * Originally proposed for March meeting but has an emergency meeting that conflicts*

Notes from prior meeting related to this topic: *“Members of the committee noted that companies are outsourcing research and development and that it might be useful to the VPR to identify relevant topics from industry sources. VPR Nusser noted that her office had convened a meeting of College Associate Deans and industry leaders to form an ad hoc study committee and begin the study. She also noted that the issue of cycles of funding with both industry and foundation sources should be studied to formulate a strategy. “*

IRB Discussion:

The RPP committee has been helpful in the past in assisting the VPR identify strategies to facilitate IRB review and communication process. Currently, the length of time to review Human Subjects Research Proposals seems to be lagging again, according to members of the committee in several colleges. VPR Nusser noted that the review time has decreased from an average of 5 weeks in 2010 to an average of 3 ½ weeks in 2014. However, the great challenge continues to be the volume of proposals needing review (from 70-170 per month according to Kerry Agnitch) and levels of staffing and service demands on the IRB review committee (faculty and staff service assignment). Martin noted that NIH deadlines are missed; which affects the ability of faculty to advanced research; and that his college has experienced 4-12 week review times for doctoral students which has impacts on progress on dissertation research.

VPR Nusser noted that staff and reviewers find that the *quality* of the proposals and *revisions* submitted after review has commenced also drive up review times required. After thoughtful and spirited discussion about factors that might affect the quality of proposals- including level of detail required and increasing oversight demands by federal agencies- the committee requested that the VPR office consider a tracking system for proposals that is more transparent for researchers after the proposal is submitted to IRB; that boilerplates or examples be published to provide examples for a few popular research designs to serve as a guide to researchers seeking IRB approval; and consider looking at similar institutions to see if they have found strategies that work to implement IRB review without overworking staff and faculty who support the review process. VPR Nusser suggested that establishing parallel review streams (rather than one) staffed by several staff would offer opportunities to process IRB review more effectively. The RPP committee will continue discussions with VPR to assist and advise as appropriate in the IRB process.

VPR Nusser reported that Grants Hub will be studying mechanisms to help faculty researchers get “to the next level,” and that they are also looking at mechanisms for tracking post award support. One early idea is to provide guidance for PI’s such as checklists and contact info to ensure various requirements associated with beginning implementation of the sponsored project within the University are met. The proposal was well received, and the committee requested further discussion about what the resources/support needs might be and how various tools or mechanisms might work to enhance the timeliness and effectiveness of research management.

Reminder of next meeting: March 26, 1 PM, 107 Lab of Mechanics.

Motion to Adjourn: Johansen, seconded, Seeger. Unanimous.