**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.”*

**January 29, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

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

Note: Chris Minion representing Badenhope at Resource Policy and Allocation Council meeting.

Call to Order

Badenhope noted need for establishing reciprocal working relationship with Dr. Nusser. Badenhope reviewed issues presented in past year, including student involvement in research and review of research needs of faculty. Suggested a review of current initiatives of VPR office and solicited committee response.

VPR Report:

Current priorities of upper administration are related to growing sponsored funding.

1. Because federal funding is flat, the administration would like to explore ways for niche areas of research to grow. The VPR office is considering which agencies could become more engaged with sponsored research at Iowa State University; fostering more robust partnerships with private industry, and also explore international contexts for research activities. Although these initiatives will be challenging, they are important to the future of the research enterprise at ISU because they will provide a more resilient foundation for ongoing research sponsorship.
2. The VPR office is organizing a Data Driven Science Initiative, with input from the Colleges, the faculty Big Data community group, and from programmatic priorities expressed by federal agencies. The Initiative includes community and visibility development, seed funds for integrated research teams, an educational platform with a common core data science curriculum, an outreach program, and a high security storage environment for the High Performance Computing facility.
3. Securing support to invest in research space (and maintaining research staff). Many units across campus will have difficulties increasing research activity without space of a size and quality that can support new effort. VPR Nusser is exploring this issue with her office and the colleges in preparation for action in future years. Examples include animal labs, greenhouses, etc.
4. Optimizing the research support system with ongoing rollout of the Grants hub, which facilitates cooperation between grant and research related support units such as OSPA and IRB. The fee structure/business model has not been fully defined, although discussions with colleges are ongoing with regard to cost allocation.

VPR Budget Request Items for FY 15-6 include the following:

1. Seed money for new research teams, especially in the area of data driven science. Requested funding for three teams per year; purpose is to provide support for a total of nine teams over a period of five years to secure funding for big data initiatives.
2. Seed funding for Associate Professors to pursue “their next big idea” to jump start new interdisciplinary research amongst those who have exhausted previous initiatives and have knowledge, experience and capacity to secure research funding. This program would complement and not overlap with college seed programs.
3. Secure seed funds for anyone to pilot new research projects or programs that will create credibility in submitting proposals.
4. Provide bridge funding so that research programs can maintain staff in gaps between funded projects; maintain capacity while research teams “re-tool” to pursue new opportunities.
5. Requested roughly 700 K for additional support staff in service units due to chronic understaffing in VPR research support units for submitting grants and supporting compliance and research integrity. Although internal cooperation through the Grants hub has helped to streamline processes, the volume of work has increased and will likely continue to increase with federal regulatory activity and increased faculty entrepreneurship.

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.

Other discussion:

Nusser and Nuter are meeting to resolve issues related to staff support for research activities. The committee has requested a meeting with both leaders this spring to provide insight and advice on this topic.

The committee also encouraged VPR Nusser to include the group on planning cycle for next fiscal year (fall 2015 for requests that go forward in spring 2016) so that feedback can be timely with regard to formulation of strategy and communication to Faculty Senate RPP Council deliberations with the Provost.

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