



**Research Council Minutes
February 26, 2009
3:00 p.m.
Champ Hall Conference Room**

RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brent Miller, Chair	Jagath Kaluarachchi	Lisa Berreau
Cliff Skousen	for Scott Hinton	for Mary Hubbard
for Doug Anderson	Forrest Fackrell	Paul Rasmussen
Marv Bennett	for Doug Lemon	Bryce Fifield
Jennifer Duncan	Tom Hardy	for Carol Strong
for Richard Clement	for Mac McKee	Vincent Wickwar
Elaine Thatcher	Nancy Mesner	
for Yolanda Flores Niemann	for Nat Frazer	

GUESTS:

Jeff Broadbent	Adam Fowles	Teresa Seeholzer
David Cowley	Joyce Kinkead	Lorraine Walker
Daryll DeWald	Anna McEntire	Ned Weinschenker
Farrell Edwards	John Morrey	Karl White
Beth Foley	David Paul	David York
Leland Foster	Russ Price	

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approval of Minutes – January 22, 2009** - Brent Miller

Marv Bennett motioned to approve the minutes of January 22, 2009. Cliff Skousen seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSIONS

1. **Welcome & Introductions** - Brent Miller

2. **Presentation: “Improving Services for Infants and Young Children with Hearing Loss”**

By: Dr. Karl White & Dr. Beth Foley – Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services

Congenital hearing loss is the most frequent birth defect in the United States. For every 10,000 children born, 30 will have permanent hearing loss as compared to 11 who are born with Down's syndrome. Of all babies born deaf, 95% are born to hearing parents.

Dr. Foley discussed the importance of why early detection (within a few days of birth) is essential in children with permanent hearing loss. Audiological education and medical services are essential in the early development stages to help these children lead full, normal, and productive lives. Because of advances in technology and early intervention over the past 15 years, this is now a possibility for many children; however, there are still many children who are missing out on these benefits. If hearing loss is not identified early, the average cost to educate a deaf child is ~ \$ 500,000 due to specialized services. Before new intervention and technology was introduced, the average child still lacked success in the classroom and was only able to achieve a reading equivalent of a 3-4 grade level. This had devastating impacts on educational, vocational, and social opportunities for these children.

Video clips were shared of deaf children interacting with other children. In the past 18 years, vast differences in communication and interaction skills were evident in the children who received early intervention and technology benefits as compared to the children who did not. Although sign language is helpful, parents do not become proficient in this area quickly enough to provide the best language models for the child.

USU's involvement has been an integral part of the progress that has been made in this area. Dr. White gave an overview of the transition phases that have evolved in this area over the past 30 years:

- 1) **Early Identification of Hearing Loss:** USU led the first clinical trial of newborn hearing screening in the United States. Today, almost 95% of all children born in the U.S. are screened before leaving the hospital.
- 2) **Assistive Listening Devices:** Hearing aids took a different manufacturing direction to fit the market needs of the young children along with the introduction of the cochlear implant technology.
- 3) **Teaching Techniques & Language Initiatives:** Whether spoken language, or sign language, early intervention with deaf children has shown the brain responds and develops to auditory/language input at very young age. Timing is critical to this development as connections within the brain can atrophy if not stimulated.
- 4) **Advocacy Nationally/Internationally:** National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) implemented at USU in 1995. NCHAM is now partnered with USU's Communication & Disorders Department to strengthen programs and provided synergy for further technological advances and enhanced services.

Utah State University is a recognized leader with communicative disorders and deaf education and USU's *Sound Beginnings* program offers more children the opportunity to have access to the benefits and services that will help them communicate more effectively and progress throughout their lives.

3. Update on Washington D.C. EPSCoR Meeting - Dean Mary Hubbard

Dean Hubbard recapped the EPSCoR process and relayed that Utah representatives met with EPSCoR program leadership on Friday, February 20, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to gain more insight about requirements prior to Utah submitting a Letter of Intent. The Utah representatives were advised after the meeting that discussions held that day fulfilled Utah's Letter of Intent requirement, and a separate meeting with NSF was not required.

The next step in the process is for the State of Utah to submit a Planning Grant Proposal. If the proposal is approved and Utah is given the title of EPSCoR eligible, access to compete in four areas will include: 1) Co-funding opportunities (EPSCoR Program Director can share funding if the project receives a favorable review) with other NSF programs, 2) Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII), which includes two funding tracts, and 3) Workshops and "Outreach" funding support.

Because EPSCoR eligibility requires statewide jurisdiction, a strategic committee will be formed with representation from various constituencies to implement a "grass roots" team to develop the planning grant. Faculty perspectives are essential to this state committee so that diversity and widespread input is captured in the process.

Comments/Suggestions

- Bryce Fifield suggested that the VPR Office hold a campus forum on this subject where faculty could give input and suggestions for the planning grant. Both Brent Miller and Mary Hubbard agreed and will coordinate.

4. USU Mandatory Furlough Discussion – David Cowley & Brent Miller

For some research programs, USU's March 2009 (3/9/09 thru 3/13/09) furlough will result in challenges/burdens.

Comments/Concerns

- Contracts are especially problematic; researchers can't take a furlough and deliver on the terms of some agreements
- Short term projects don't allow time for completion if an employee furlough is required
- Future competitiveness is undermined by not performing per expectations or agreement
- Longer term projects with near end dates don't allow for furlough time to be rolled into next year
- Some budgets are only salary; funds cannot be moved to operating expenses
- Funding is lost if budget (which is mostly salary) cannot be expended by end date
- Reduced research expenditures translate to reduced recovery of overhead dollars

Although the Furlough Exemption Form was implemented to address special circumstances and allow flexibility/adjustments where necessary, input was relayed that the furlough still impacts USU's ability to fulfill grant requirements and will result in fiscal problems.

David Cowley noted that with specific research cases where there is no flexibility to adjust/swap furlough days and still achieve grant requirements, the deans have the purview to make exceptions to the mandatory furlough within their college.

To preserve extramural revenue funding and address concerns should future furloughs be considered, Research Council input, recommendations, and examples will be compiled and submitted to the president, provost, and USU's Financial Office for consideration.

5. **Equipment Transfers for Departing Faculty** – Daryll DeWald

An attachment was distributed (hardcopy and electronic) that detailed five basic steps to follow when addressing disposition and ownership of research equipment prior to faculty/colleagues departing from Utah State University. Darryl highlighted the following questions:

1. Determine who owns the equipment. It either belongs to USU or a Sponsoring Agency. Even when startup funds are used for new faculty, USU owns the equipment.
2. What to do if the Sponsoring Agency retains title or has control over the equipment
3. What to do if the title resides with the University
4. Determine current and future needs of the equipment. If no future need is determined, the Department Head should declare the equipment "excess" and proceed with steps to send the equipment to Surplus Sales.
5. Disposal /Transfer Steps (Completion of Equipment Transfer Form – See Operating Policies & Procedures, Section 500/503)

Following these steps will reduce problematic situations, address uncertainties, and reduce time spent in resolving equipment concerns. A copy of the guidelines can be found on the Sponsored Programs website at:

<http://spo.usu.edu/files/uploads/Equipment%20transfers%20for%20departing%20faculty.pdf>

6. **GSS Research Symposium** – Aaron Davis, Chair

The Graduate Student Symposium will be held April 1, 2009, and is organized by graduate students. This opportunity gives grad students the ability to present their research, improve their presentation skills, collaborate with other students, and also compete for cash prizes. In past years, 80-90 graduate students have participated; representing 6-7% of the graduate student body. Prior to this year's event, resources and workshops will be available to students where they can receive instruction to assist them in preparing for their presentations.

Aaron thanked the deans for funding support of the symposium and asked the colleges to encourage participation in this event as the symposium enhances the research environment at USU.

7. **USTAR & Stimulus Funding (Competitive Opportunities)**

Ned Weinshenker & Brent Miller

News and information about the 2009 Stimulus Legislation was released on February 20, 2009, and includes research funding opportunities available to universities. Some monies will be available by way of formula funding through the governor's office and state agencies.

Selected federal agencies will also receive a substantial increase of funding. Brent Miller distributed handouts that included reference to specific funding amounts targeted for scientific research priorities within NIH & NSF.

NIH's budget has been increased by \$ 8.2 billion and has specified ways they are going to distribute the available funds as follows:

1. All previous RO1 submissions that were highly rated during the peer review process, but were rejected after 10/1/08 due to lack of funding, are now eligible to receive funding because of the stimulus allocation. Proposals rejected prior to this date will need to be resubmitted for consideration.
2. New solicitation opportunities will be introduced.
3. Currently awarded projects also have the potential to receive supplemental funding.
4. New types (e.g., NIH Challenge Grant Program) of funding opportunities will also be considered.

The focus with this stimulus funding will be to assure monies are prioritized to projects that are capable of making significant advances within the next two years.

NSF's budget has been increased by \$ 3 billion, of which, \$ 2 billion will be targeted to grant applications that were previously denied due to lack of funding, as well as the following:

- Requests with Major Research Instrumentation (MRIs) requirements
- Academic Research Infrastructure (ARI) needs
- Programs that have fundamental facility construction requirements

NASA and the Department of Energy (DoE) are still working to identify their critical priorities. NASA is targeted to receive \$ 1 billion, of which they have indicated that ~ \$ 400 million will support research. DoE has been allocated to receive ~ \$ 1.6 billion.

Questions/Comments

- David Paul relayed that a key component of the stimulus funding will include extensive reporting requirements with mandates such as; quarterly reports, completion/status progress reports, evaluations of the number of jobs created and retained, and detailed information on sub-contractors associated with an award.
- Lorraine Walker shared information from the February 2009 Council on Government Relations (COGR) meeting held in Washington D.C. She referenced that PIs may receive requests from either NIH or NSF to submit an amended budget or amended work plan for a previous submitted proposal. If this should happen, an immediate response to the agency will be critical.
- The latest news releases and additional stimulus information from COGR is available on their website at: www.cogr.edu. Additionally, David Paul (Sponsored Programs Office) will disseminate information as updates become available.

8. NSF Research Expenditure Report - Irene Jorgensen

To explain the process of filling out NSF forms and reporting NSF research expenditures in both the science and non-science fields, Irene distributed a reference page of classification

codes for all departments and disciplines. This reference page helped members of the Research Council better understand the NSF R&D expenditures reports completed by the Controller's Office at USU.

9. **Time & Effort Reporting (Documentation)** – Irene Jorgensen

Time & Effort reporting is a “shared” responsibility by the department, PI, and Sponsored Programs Office. Federal OMB Circular A-21 requires that the *University document the distribution of direct activity to each individual sponsored project*.

Irene shared examples of where USU has lost revenue on sponsored projects because effort was inaccurately reported or proper documentation was missing. Because USU does Time & Effort certification annually, timely reporting is critical. USU does not have a standardized process for documenting Time & Effort Reporting because departments need flexibility in methods that are most suited for their processes and PIs.

In the past year, several higher education institutions across the country have been financially penalized for not complying with Federal regulations for proper documentation with sponsored projects. Non-compliance can also result in lost funding and reduced opportunities to compete for future funding. Time & Effort Reporting guidelines have been revised and can be viewed on the Controller's Office website:
<http://www.usu.edu/hr/policies/section500/582.pdf>

10. **Research Matters & Research Week Update** – Anna McEntire

Anna gave an overview of events that will take place during Research Week 2009. She highlighted specific dates/times for deans and department heads to be aware of, along with workshops designed to assist faculty in the area of Sponsored Programs, New Faculty Seed Grant Programs, and the Graduate Scholars Forum. Flyers announcing Research Week will be posted and colleges will receive more information electronically the first week of March. Additional information is also posted on the Research Week website:
<http://researchweek.usu.edu/>

11. **Wrap Up Discussion and Calendar Events** – Brent Miller

- Calendar Events:
 - March 26, 2009 – Research Council
 - March 30 – April 3, 2009 - Research Week
 - April 2, 2009 – Innovation & Invention Day
 - 3:30-5:00 p.m. – SDL Calibration Building
 - April 24, 2009 – Sunrise Session in Salt Lake City
 - 7:30 a.m.
 - Little America Hotel
 - Presenter: Ronda Callister – “Careers of Professional and Academic Women: Progress and On-going Challenges”

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Teresa Seeholzer, Research Council Secretary