

**Utah State University  
Research Council Minutes  
February 28, 2008 - 3:00 p.m.  
Champ Hall**

**RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Clifford Skousen  
for Doug Anderson  
Marv Bennett  
Jeff Broadbent  
Byron Burnham  
Nat Frazer

Jagath Kaluarachchi  
for Scott Hinton  
Mary Hubbard  
Gary Kiger  
James MacMahon

Doug Ramsey  
Paul Rasmussen  
Jim Dorward  
for Carol Strong  
Vincent Wickwar

**INVITED GUESTS:**

Steven Harris  
Irene Jorgensen  
Joyce Kinkead  
Arie Kirk

Anna McEntire  
Robert Pack  
David Paul  
Russ Price

Sara Rule  
Teresa Seeholzer  
Ben Sessions  
Lorraine Walker

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. **Approval of Minutes of January 24, 2008** (Brent Miller)  
Clifford Skousen motioned to approve the minutes of January 24, 2008. Doug Ramsey seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

**DISCUSSIONS**

1. **Welcome & Introductions** (Brent Miller)
2. **Presentation: Center for Active Sensing & Imaging (CASI) – “Terrestrial Ladar Research Through USTAR”** By: Robert Pack, Associate Professor – USU Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

The CASI research team includes individuals from both USU’s Center for Advanced Imaging LADAR, as well as personnel from SDL’s active sensors group. Their mission statement is to, *“Evolve into a world leader in atmospheric lidar and laser radar research and development. Create significant new business opportunities for Utah based on this world-class core competency.”* Four areas of focus were noted within this mission: 1) *Apply current and future IP to commercial applications,* 2) *Boost the creation of economically competitive products,* 3) *Eventually encompass other innovative sensors,* 4) *Contribute to U.S. homeland security and national defense.*

LIDAR (Laser Detection and Ranging) is similar to radar except laser light is used instead of radio waves to determine the distance to, and shape of objects. Lidar, besides having good visual imaging, is able to penetrate vegetation under the tree canopy and see the ground, whereas this is not an option with conventional techniques. If a point is obscured in one image, it can be seen from many other images taken. Examples were shown of early airborne mapping work conducted in Hawaii using multi-view 3D cameras.

Both commercial and military opportunities exist with this concept. Five commercial USTAR-funded growth areas are being pursued. Additionally, recruitment and implementation of team leaders have been identified in four of the five areas with excellent progress in the past year and a half. These areas are as follows:

1. Laser Optics
2. Lidar/Ladar Receivers
3. Real-Time Data Processing
4. Laser Physics
5. Geomatics

One of the commercial successes, LASSI (Lidar-assisted stereo imager) Airborne System, received USTAR funding and has completed two projects to date. Marketing efforts are also being pursued to build a second system through a Utah-based company. Applications include forestry and agriculture monitoring, floodplain and channel mapping, geological and corridor mapping, radio propagation terrain models, city and construction site mapping, and computer game entertainment model generation. LASSI also provides a USU Service Center, which over time, will become a valuable science and research tool at USU, within the state of Utah, and nationally.

### 3. **Graduate Student Health Insurance Update** By: Byron Burnham

First Risk (part of United Health Care) has been selected as USU's graduate student health insurance vendor. They have approximately 350 plans in force across the nation covering approximately 250,000 students. The 12 month premium per graduate student will be \$ 1165.00. USU will cover 80% (\$ 932.00) of the premium cost, with the graduate student's portion at 20% (\$233.00). Coverage will be implemented around August 15, 2008. If a department has graduate students arrive prior to that date, a pro-rated amount will be offered for the additional coverage.

USU Health Services is currently compiling a brochure that will cover questions about family upgrades (family premium not covered by USU) and specific details about the plan. This brochure will be posted on the USU website within the next 30-45 days.

The question was asked if coverage is mandatory for graduate students? Dean Burnham confirmed that graduate student coverage is mandatory and is classified as "hard waiver." Should a graduate student have other insurance coverage, they will be required to provide proof of alternate insurance in order to bypass this coverage. Graduate students who are available for this coverage will be identified in the Banner system the first week of March, 2008. The week coverage begins, department accounts will receive a direct charge to cover the premiums.

Dean Nat Frazer commented that this process has been in process for a long time and has resulted in many hours of work to understand the full scope of issues and challenges. He recognized the efforts by Dean Burnham, along with many other individuals, to take this project forward and arrive at a conclusion that is both a positive step for the University and graduate students.

4. **New Seed Funding Programs – Update** By: Jeff Broadbent

Jeff relayed that he and Brent Miller met with the USU Executive Committee in January to present new seed funding programs for growing sponsored research at Utah State University. Recommendations from the Research Focus Group included new programs under the following acronyms:

- GEM → Grant-writing Experience through Mentorship
- SPARC → Seed Program to Advance Research Collaboration
- RC → Research Catalyst
- GART → Grants to Aid Research for Teaching-intensive Faculty

Jeff relayed that the Executive Committee approved GEM, SPARC, and RC, as new seed funding opportunities, however, GART (Grants to Aid Research for Teaching-intensive Faculty) was not approved by the executive committee due to a strong concern that this program did not address the central goal of growing research at USU.

A memo was distributed to deans on February 5, 2008, outlining the decision of the executive committee. Guidelines, application procedures, project timelines, and budget information for the new programs are available on the VPR website at: [http://research.usu.edu/htm/grants\\_funding](http://research.usu.edu/htm/grants_funding). Jeff also commented that the new programs will be offered semi-annually with the first round of proposals due to the VPR office on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Training workshops will be offered during Research Week (Monday, March 31, 2008), which will give background and tips about each of the new seed grants.

5. **Fixed Price Contract Procedure - Update** By: Irene Jorgensen

As follow-up to last month's discussion regarding fixed price residuals, Irene was asked to research what impact the new procedure (Ref: Controller's Office 2.2.2.6) would have on projects which have residuals after the project date has ended. Irene distributed a spreadsheet and noted that as of 2/26/08, 11 projects have residuals which would be subject to the 25% assessment as these projects were charged a lower rate than our negotiated F&A rate.

**Comments/Observations/Concerns:**

- Marv Bennett commented that the new procedure would likely encourage units to charge unrelated costs to a project in an effort to avoid the 25% assessment on residuals.

- Lorraine Walker commented that from her viewpoint, she believes the procedure will promote P.I.s to more accurately project costs on fixed price contracts and assure costs are appropriately charged to a project prior to the end of a contract.

Based on the various viewpoints expressed, Brent Miller asked that Sponsored Programs, the Controller's Office, Lorraine Walker, Marv Bennett, and any other interested parties, meet together separately to explore and discuss the issue further. Recommendations will be presented at a future Research Council meeting.

#### 6. **Grants.gov Transition to Adobe Applications** By: David Paul

The federal government has historically allowed various agencies to have their own portal access for receiving grant proposals. Because of inconsistencies and limitations with software interface, the government is implementing a new submission process that uses Adobe applications. David commented that USU faculty and staff received a memo, dated 2/5/08, which outlines the transition and steps to download the latest Adobe Acrobat Reader. If users do not use the latest Adobe version, they will experience errors in the submission process that will impact a proposal from being processed. The Sponsored Programs Office is available to help address questions and concerns that may arise during the software transition. David has reviewed the software and commented that he believes the changes will be positive.

#### **Questions:**

- Does NSF still use "FastLane" as a submission option for processing proposals? David confirmed that both options are currently available, but NSF plans to use FastLane exclusively for administration purposes in the near future. More information will be forwarded to faculty and staff as it becomes available.
- Does the new Adobe version work on the Mac systems as well? Yes. The SPO website will allow users to download either the Mac or Pc version (Ref: <http://spo.usu.edu>).

#### 7. **Undergraduate Research – Update** By: Joyce Kinkead

Joyce gave an overview of this year's Undergraduate Research Day at the State Capitol held on January 24, 2008. This signature event for USU and the U of U just completed its eighth anniversary since inception. USU was represented by 36 students/29 posters and highlighted these students and their projects. This event enables our legislators to see first-hand the important role of both teaching and research. Next year's event will take place on January 22, 2008.

Each year Joyce Albrecht hosts an annual Legislative Spouses Luncheon. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, eight students were invited to share their research at this event. Faculty participation included Ron Munger, College of Agriculture, and Maureen Hearn, College of HASS.

On February 29, 2008, 25 USU students will also participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research (UCUR). This year's event will be co-hosted by

BYU and UVSC and is another excellent opportunity for USU students to interface with students from other state institutions, expand their interaction skills, and share their research.

Next on the calendar is the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), which is scheduled for April 9 through April 13, 2008. Sixteen USU students have been accepted to present at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland.

Joyce relayed that all of these opportunities not only showcase the students, but tell the story of undergraduate research and faculty mentorship at USU.

8. **Research Week & Research Matters – Update** By: Anna McEntire

Anna distributed copies of the Research Week agenda for March 31 through April 3, 2008. She gave a brief overview of the week's events and encouraged deans, department heads, and faculty to participate. Anna and David Paul gave a brief overview of the SPO workshops to be held on Tuesday, April 1, 2008. Areas that will be covered include the following:

- Industry Contracts
- SPO Basics
- Grants.gov
  - Adobe transition
  - Funding resources
  - Forms
  - Entire site overview

Faculty will be encouraged to sign up for the workshops in advance so that SPO can know in advance how many will be attending. Additional information about Research Week is available at <http://researchweek.usu.edu/htm/undergraduate>.

9. **Other Issues & Upcoming Calendar Events** By: Brent Miller

- The Vice President for Research Office is in the process of meeting with all colleges individually to review and address possible issues/challenges deans or department heads might have relative to research. During these discussions, an overview is given of research funds that are supporting activities in that particular college. It is hoped that all college visits will be completed within the next few months.
- Steve Harris, Library Representative, noted journal inflation rates are covered for the next fiscal year. Fortunately, no journals will be cut this next year. An on-line survey has been distributed (due 2/29/08) to gather input from departments relative to options of swapping journal options that would benefit their future teaching and research requirements. Brent Miller noted that the Provost has made a strong commitment to support library resources by funding the escalating journal costs and on-line subscription for the next five (5) years. It was also noted that the new Dean of Libraries, Richard Clement, will be joining USU on July 1, 2008.

- Brent distributed an update of the FY2007 USU Research Performance Dashboard and discussed trend fluctuations from 2006 through 2008. New to the performance dashboard is tracking of undergraduate research transcript scholars. To receive recognition in this area, students are required to complete two (2) semesters of undergraduate research scholarship or creative activity, disseminate their work, and receive endorsement by the student's faculty mentor. Applications for this recognition are available on-line by accessing the VPR website.

### **Calendar Events**

- March 27, 2008 --- Research Council
- March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 --- USU Research Week

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Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By: Teresa Seeholzer, Research Council Secretary