



**Research Council Minutes
November 20, 2008
3:00 p.m.
Champ Hall Conference Room**

RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brent Miller, Chair
Clifford Skousen
for Doug Anderson
Marv Bennett
Byron Burnham

Richard Clement
Nat Frazer
Jagath Kaluarachchi
for Scott Hinton
Mac McKee

Mary Hubbard
Paul Rasmussen
Jim Dorward
for Carol Strong
Vincent Wickwar

INVITED GUESTS:

DeeVon Bailey
Lisa Berreau
Jeff Broadbent
Bryce Fifield

Adam Fowles
Irene Jorgensen
Anna McEntire
David Paul

Teresa Seeholzer
Lorraine Walker
Ned Weinschenker

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approval of Minutes – October 23, 2008** - Brent Miller

Adam Fowles, ASUSU Graduate Studies VP, requested the minutes be revised to reference the following verbiage to agenda item 4, paragraph 2, line 3.

Revision: Brent Miller noted that Adam Fowles and Dean Burnham discussed this shortfall earlier in the week and noted that it has been at least 8 years since funding for student travel has been increased. Brent relayed that he was in favor of contributing \$25,000, which would be an increase of \$18,000 from the VPR Office.

Nat Frazer motioned to approve the minutes with the revision. Byron Burnham seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSIONS

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

2. Undergraduate Research Advisory Board Presentation

By: Lisa Berreau – Associate Dean, College of Science & Undergraduate Research
Advisory Board Chair

This board was implemented in the 2007-2008 academic year and includes a faculty representative from each college who has actively participated as a research mentor in the previous year. Additional USU representation consists of the regional campuses, library, honors, Sigma Xi (Scientific Research Group), Vice President for Research Office, and current students who were chosen as “Undergraduate Research Students of the Year” for their college.

The objective of this board is to identify the strengths of USU’s undergraduate research program along with focusing on areas of improvement. Lisa recapped some of the existing strengths such as URCO grants (began in 1975) and the Undergraduate Research Fellows program which was implemented in 2003. As a result of these programs, USU students have become much more competitive nationally. Positive outcomes have resulted in both the increased numbers of USU Goldwater Scholars, as well as recognition in prestigious fellowships across various fields of study.

Undergraduate Research has also enhanced the research culture on campus as an increased number of students are choosing to participate in National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research (UCUR), and Research on Capitol Hill. Lisa mentioned additional positives which include the following: 1) Undergraduate research is now a USU marketing message for both student recruitment and retention, 2) USU offers a *Undergraduate Research Scholar* transcript designation for those who meet the requirements, and 3) 26% of USU’s graduating seniors have noted they participated in undergraduate research while attending USU.

Some of the challenges identified by this board include funding constraints related to grants, travel, and lack of interdisciplinary/international programs. Lisa noted that if a PI has an active NSF award, the option exists (even if not identified in the original proposal) for the PI to contact the program officer to seek supplemental funds. In some cases, funding is available to help support a student researcher during the summer.

To improve communication and advising support about undergraduate research, Lisa commented that the URAB is looking at efficient and inexpensive recommendations to increase student awareness in both areas. Some of the strategies include: 1) Enhance funding for URCO through fund raising campaign, 2) Implementation of a “Pilot Program to Enhance Undergraduate Research for Humanities”, and 3) Expand student accessibility to undergraduate resources. USU’s Department of Biology has done an excellent job with their website because it has a direct link to assist students, and also provides students with a designated contact person to answer questions and provide one-on-one assistance/direction about undergraduate research.

Lisa concluded her presentation by noting that the Office of Research will be happy to share existing stories, and photographs of undergraduate research. EZ-Plug assistance and/or site hosted help is also available to improve website information.

Ned Weinshenker noted that his office (Ray DeVito or Allen Wood) would be willing to attend a future URAB meeting to discuss ways the TCO and USU undergraduate researchers can interface and discuss commercialization ideas. Ned and Lisa will coordinate this action.

3. Update on EPSCoR Process - Brent Miller & Jeff Broadbent

The Governor's Science Advisor, Tamara Goetz, convened a meeting in October with representation from Utah research institutions, as well as William Sederburg, Utah's Commissioner for Higher Education. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss what is EPSCoR, why Utah is eligible, what opportunities exist, and how Utah could proceed to acquire the funds for the required match to participate in this program.

The next step will be for the governor's science advisor, along with the managing director of the Governor's Office for Economic Development (GOED), Gary Harter, to draft a letter on behalf of the governor that will communicate Utah's intent to apply for recognition as an EPSCoR Jurisdiction.

Comments/Input

- Nat Frazer asked if the Utah EPSCoR team is working with other states who have received this recognition in an effort to better understand the requirements and gain knowledge from states that have been through the process. Brent confirmed that USU has, and will continue to, interface with several contacts (including other states) who are very experienced in the EPSCoR process. Brent also noted that James MacMahon has vast experience with NSF projects and has relayed some contact information of an individual who is familiar with the EPSCoR jurisdiction process and is willing to consult with USU in this effort.
- Jeff Broadbent relayed that some faculty have asked, "if USU is eligible, can we just proceed towards seeking supplemental funding through NSF without the jurisdiction. The answer is no. Institutions must be fully recognized with the EPSCoR designation before they can proceed to obtain the supplemental funding.

4. Update on Time & Effort Reporting – Irene Jorgensen & David Paul

Irene thanked all of those who have helped bring closure to the Time and Effort reports over the past few months. She commented that 1038/1042 are now completed with only four (4), needing further action. These four are signed; however, salary reallocation needs to be processed to coincide with the effort that has been reported. Action is currently underway to resolve these remaining few reports.

Irene noted that another important component of Time and Effort reporting is compliance. Because salary and benefits are approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the award expenditures, this is a critical risk area with all awards. The Federal government outlines the requirements as follows: 1) A written policy must be implemented, 2) On-going training must take place, 3) Independent evaluations/audits of all Time and Effort reports, and 4) Reports must be monitored on an on-going basis relative to committed versus actual effort. Irene noted that USU has implemented procedures and steps to cover all requirements.

David commented that the preparation stage of each proposal is very important. On-going evaluations will compare what the PI committed on the SPO-1 form to the documentation the PI submits. If there is not a match, the PI needs to clarify if the Time and Effort is a "cost share" and also provide support documentation to track the activity. Flexibility is also necessary for those cases when minor adjustments to the original proposal are necessary. The controller's office has confirmed that a 2% fluctuation is acceptable for the following:

- The PI has an oversight role where a graduate student or post-doc has the greater portion of the time and effort on a given award. The PI's role in this scenario would be monitoring and periodic review of the project with no cost share noted.

If the time and effort fluctuation is greater than 2%, further documentation/action is required to properly identify the adjusted time and effort. David noted that with every proposal, the PI has some level of time and effort oversight even if it is 1%.

Comments/Inputs

- Bryce Fifield asked for clarification on what steps should be taken if effort changes on an award. David noted that government regulations require USU to obtain **sponsor approval** when effort reduction is 25% or greater. Changes which are less than the 25% reduction can be handled internally with the PI working directly with the Sponsored Programs and Controller's Office. An email notification describing the adjustment is sufficient.

5. "Shared Credit" – (Revisions of SPO-1 Form) – David Paul

The revised form was distributed electronically in advance of the meeting. Hard copies were also shared with those in attendance. David highlighted the changes and noted that input received in October's Research Council was implemented on the form.

Action: Marv Bennett made a motion to approve the revisions to the SPO-1 form. Nat Frazer seconded the motion; motion approved unanimously.

David commented that the revised form would be uploaded and posted on the SPO website.

6. "An Overview of Activities in Africa" – DeeVon Bailey

DeeVon highlighted past and on-going major projects in both the Middle East and Northern Africa and mentioned that Africa continues to be a strategic part of the world. Teaching the people leadership skills helps them to identify opportunities within their communities and enables them to be successful. He commented that infusing money doesn't solve the problems, but when the people are taught within the system on how to identify the needs, the results are significant and positive.

DeeVon noted that USU will continue with the on-going projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Senegal, as well as new proposal opportunities in Mali, Senegal, and Mozambique. He commented that the goal with the new proposals is to team with African universities to help them become more relevant within their countries as engines for economic growth.

7. INRA Changes & Future - Brent Miller

Inland Northwest Research Alliance (INRA) has partially been funded by fees when the organization was associated with INEL; however, management fees are no longer part of the revenue, so earmarks became the main support channel. The INRA Board of Directors, made the decision to discontinue seeking earmarks as a way to fund INRA. A model for sustainability is now being pursued towards competitive and collaborative larger scale projects.

Brent noted that Mac McKee is currently working on a water initiative for INRA and USU is committed to seek similar projects that would provide funding benefits to USU.

Byron Burnham also noted that the INRA Board recently made a decision to add additional executive members to their board. The board will increase from the original eight (8) university presidents to twenty-four (24) members by adding the Vice President for Research and the Graduate School Dean from each of the universities. The presidents from each university will determine who participates, but this extension to the INRA Board will enable ad-hoc committees to be formed to enhance graduate training and research.

8. **\$ 200 Million Research Goal** – Brent Miller & Jeff Broadbent

USU continues to look for opportunities to grow sponsored research. New ideas have been implemented such as the RC/GEM/SPARC seed grants, along with hiring a VPR Grant Writer as a dedicated resource to support faculty and research units across campus.

The VPR Office recently provided the deans with a detailed breakdown of historical awards within each of the colleges. The deans have been asked to provide their best estimate of where they envision their research funding to be in three years. From this information the objective is to identify where the “bottlenecks” and barriers exist, and what opportunities are available to expand research to meet the goals.

The VPR Office will make appointments with each of the deans in the coming weeks to visit one-on-one and discuss this process in greater detail.

Comments/Input

- Nat Frazer commented that the biggest and most serious barrier he sees is where young assistant professors are carrying all the responsibility they can handle, plus they are already producing at 100% of capacity, but some tenured faculty are not productive. In order to resolve this, the faculty code needs to be revised to address the post-tenure review process which would define clearer objectives that must be met by tenured faculty members. The faculty code is weak in this area.
- Bryce Fifield noted another barrier in this area relates to sweeping away of carry forward E&G funds. As grant writers become more successful, their long term salary is in jeopardy because E&G funds would not be retained for the following year.

9. **Revised Research Office Mission Statement** - Anna McEntire

The existing VPR Mission Statement does not reflect the new areas of responsibilities that have been implemented in the past few years which include: Undergraduate Research, International Research Programs, and adjustments to the Technology Commercialization Office now under the direction of Ned Weinshenker at the Innovation Campus. Additional improvements were recommended in the area of research integrity. Anna distributed copies of the existing statement, along with an outline of the proposed revisions and welcomed Research Council input.

Comments/Input

- Nat Frazer noted that he would like to see an addition to the statement that distinguishes USU as a land grant research university.
- Bryce Fifield noted that he would like to see reference to the role of the University and the Research Office in cultivating an environment within the state that recognizes and appreciates the value of research to the quality of life, as well as the economic vitality in the state.

10. Wrap Up Discussion & Calendar Reminders:

Brent shared a handout from the National Academies about program opportunities for post-docs and senior research associates. The handout included reference to eligibility, how to apply, and a website reference to obtain further information.

Brent reminded attendees about the call for abstracts for the International Polar Year Symposium and noted funding support is available from INRA. Those interested should contact the VPR Office. It was also noted that the deadline for abstract submissions has been extended to December 15, 2008.

- No Research Council in December
- Week of December 1, 2008 --- Notification of RC, GEM, & SPARC Awards (Start Date of January 1, 2009)
- January 22, 2008 --- Research Council
- January 29, 2008 --- Research on Capitol Hill

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By: Teresa Seeholzer, Research Council Secretary