Faculty Council on Research met on Tuesday, April 9, at 12:30 p.m. in 26 Gerberding. Chair Ross Heath presided.

**PRESENT:** Professors Booth, Heath, Kartsonis, Kiyak, Troll, Vance, Vitaliano, Vogt  
Ex-Officio Blake, Camber, Zuiches, Parks, Perrin

**ABSENT:** Professors Gordon, Reh, Ruzicka, Stewart,  
Ex-Officio Ghosh, Kahl, Ludwig, Sjåvik, Takhar

**Guest:** Provost Lee Huntsman

**Synopsis:**
1. Approve agenda  
2. Approve minutes  
3. Announcements  
4. Discussion with Provost Lee Huntsman: Health of the Research Enterprise at the University of Washington

**Approve agenda**
The agenda was approved.

**Approve minutes**
The March minutes were approved.

**Announcements**
At Heath's behest, Council members spent a few minutes formulating questions for Provost Lee Huntsman and discussing concerns they would like to see addressed. Issues included the level of support appropriate for Grant and Contract Services and Grant and Contract Accounting, the study on the reorganization of the Research Office, the review of the Friday Harbor lab facility, and the role of IPMAC in the decision-making of the University administration. Council members also wished to have more in-depth information about all aspects of indirect cost recovery.

**Discussion with Provost Lee Huntsman**
Heath opened the conversation by asking Huntsman for his thoughts on funding Grant and Contract Accounting (GCA) and Grant and Contract Services (GCS) based upon the requirement to meet a specific set of performance criteria (benchmarks) rather than in response to budget shortfalls.

Huntsman agreed that these departments have been under-funded, that department managers have done a good job with the resources available, and that establishing departmental benchmarks might be useful. He acknowledged that the growth in grants is positive and important. On the negative side, there is no question that there will be budget cuts levied across campus. The question is whether some areas will be exempt from cuts, Huntsman said. The Provost's office recognizes the importance of the Research infrastructure and is working to spare it from cuts.
Heath suggested that the Council work to develop benchmarks for GCS and GCA based upon the kinds of backlogs that are acceptable and prudent, and to advise the Provost of the level of support necessary to achieve the benchmarks. Huntsman welcomed that kind of input from the Council.

Mark Troll referred to presentations that have been made to the Council by GCA and GCS and expressed his general impression that most of the efficiencies that can be gained by applying technology have already been gained. The number of proposals processed per person by UW staff is much higher than that of peer institutions and the dollars spent per proposal is much lower. Asuman Kiyak agreed with Troll's perception that the return on investment at GCA and GCS is very high. In addition, Sue Camber and Carol Zuiches both observed, GCS and GCA costs are paid by indirect cost recovery. "If we're paying for it as researchers and we're getting a tremendous benefit from the efficiency Sue and Carol have put into place, then why would you even think about any cuts?" Kiyak asked Huntsman.

Huntsman said that his predecessors at the UW chose to take all the different revenue sources the University can make decisions about and put them into a General Fund and a Designated Fund. Indirect costs did not, and do not, go cleanly to research-related support. In addition, Huntsman said, there has been a tendency in the past to levy cuts and give increases across the board. The University is now trying to "migrate away" from that practice. The biggest step the UW has taken is to create the Research Cost Recovery, where a proportional amount of the indirect costs recovered (currently 15.5%) is shipped back to the schools and colleges.

The next big watershed event, said Huntsman, is what is happening now. State budget monies are going down, tuition is going up, and indirect costs are going up. How does that influence our budget decisions, our cuts and investments, in this very difficult climate? Historically, the UW has opted for across-the-board cuts. But there is now a discussion about non-uniform cuts and investments; it is difficult to know how this will play out. The one thing that is certain is that the UW will invest more in research facilities next year, because it is a "base" year upon which Federal funding levels will be negotiated.

Anna Kartsonis asked how this will affect the part of the University that does not receive Federal funding, specifically the Humanities. Huntsman responded that increased tuition and downsizing of faculty and staff will be part of the balancing of institutional resources. The only part of the UW enterprise that is doing well is the externally-funded research - faculty scholarship in the Humanities is typically not funded externally and so is very difficult to protect.

Peter Vitaliano observed that the UW is raising a tremendous amount of development money compared to its peers. Are any of those monies being raised by and for Humanities and Social Sciences?

Huntsman pointed to the Simpson Center for the Humanities and Summer Arts Festival as a good example of private funds being raised for Humanities. Arts and Sciences, he said, has set a goal of raising 100 endowed professorships in the next few years. An endowed chair provides an entire compensation package for a distinguished faculty member - this frees up state money, so there is an incremental increase in monies available in that particular school for each chair that is endowed. There is a very active fundraising agenda compared to two decades ago - last year, for example, the UW raised $135 million in outright gifts and $100 million in corporate foundation support.
Heath raised the issue of communication and transparency in the use of the 15.5% indirect cost recovery that goes back to the deans - the Faculty Code says that College Councils are supposed to be involved in advising on the use of these monies, Heath pointed out, but in fact there are College Councils that have never heard that these monies exist. There are not necessarily big gripes about how this 15.5% is being spent, but the point is that nobody knows where it's going. Is there a way that this process can be made more transparent?

Huntsman said that this needs to be done at the individual college level, because schools and colleges don't all administer the RCR in the same way. In some instances, the money is spread to departments; in some instances, it goes to investigators - there are different traditions and needs. The dollars are going back to schools and colleges so there will be a more direct conversation between researchers and deans - the central administration does not tell schools and colleges what to do with the money. If you want to get into that and make it more transparent, Huntsman said, you need to do it on a school-by-school basis.

Heath observed that this might be more easily done if each school and college had to report how they spent last year's 15.5% - if this information were available, people would be able to focus on the items they have questions about, instead of feeling unhappy and mistrustful about the whole process.

Huntsman said in his view the real issue for faculty is to know that the money is spent well, and that can only be resolved at the local level.

Ed Perrin said he can't imagine that there wouldn't be some accountability somewhere along the line - the individual investigator wants to know "Why am I not getting the services I need?" In the years since the 15.5% has been returned to schools and colleges, things haven't improved in this regard and the central administration is being blamed. Why doesn't the Provost's Office put the accountability for the money where it belongs - shouldn't the deans have to tell where the money was spent, and whether faculty helped to make those decisions? Cathryn Booth agreed this is of utmost importance, especially for WOT research faculty who are responsible for bringing in their own money but have no idea where it goes.

Troll pointed out that research grants are going up every year, so the indirect cost allocation is also rising by substantial amounts. Yet researchers are told that there isn't any money for expansion, or "we may think about protecting you from cuts." The money coming in is going up by significant amounts, but there seems to be something missing - more money coming in, less money available. Where's it all going? It may be going into very good things, Troll added, but the point is we don't know, and this is corrosive to good relations among University faculty. Not knowing, people tend to think the worst.

Huntsman countered that the University has made the budget dramatically more transparent in the last five years, has implemented the RCR policy, has held forums on these issues for the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting and the deans, and has put this information on the Web - nevertheless, there is clearly a communications problem. Of the $18 million ICR in the budget for next year, Huntsman said, $4 million will go out to units and the rest will be spent primarily on research infrastructure (services and facilities). The emphasis will be more and more to protect that revenue for the research enterprise.

To address the communications issue, Huntsman will summarize this information in a Provost letter to the campus community. He will emphasize that the research enterprise is doing well in terms of revenues but is under-funded in terms of infrastructure and that the UW has chosen to
make the needed investments in research. Huntsman also said the Council could make suggestions at the school level that the deans invent a more transparent way to report the increasingly complex ways that monies are spent.

Kayak asked that GCA and GCS be exempted from budget cuts in view of the critical services they provide to the research enterprise and the remarkable efficiencies the two departments have achieved. Huntsman responded he would take that under advisement.

Heath asked Huntsman for an update on the proposed reorganization of the Research Office. Huntsman responded that the bottom line is that there will be no major reorganization of the office. He believes the office's "portfolio" needs some attention, but the new Vice Provost for Research, when chosen, will inherit the office pretty much "as is" and can effect changes over time as necessary.

Heath relayed a "grumble" to Huntsman on behalf of the Research Advisory Board and the Friday Harbor Lab Review Board. A review of the Friday Harbor lab was recently undertaken without the involvement of its governing bodies. This is not in the best interests of the lab, and has created some bad feelings. Huntsman acknowledged this and thanked Heath for relaying the viewpoint. Heath and the Council thanked the Provost for attending the meeting.

Heath will put together a request for information from the schools and colleges, asking deans for their policies with respect to allocating the 15.5% indirect cost recovery funds, including the degree of faculty involvement and how last year's allocations were spent. This should address a lot of concerns among faculty who obtain grants with indirect costs.

Heath will also follow up with the Provost on the issue of protecting GCA and GCS from cuts. It is important that the Council provide and reinforce information that will help the Provost make an argument for the breadth of positive impact the two departments make on grant revenues generated for the UW, and the importance of the compliance work they do in protecting the University from adverse financial, legal, and public relations impacts. Heath will work with Carol Zuiches and Sue Camber to establish benchmarks for these functions and communicate them to the Provost.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.