Minutes of the
Faculty Council on Research
20 November 2003; 8:30 am

Present: Cathryn Booth La-Force, Ross Heath, H. Asuman Kiyak, - Chair
Subhoda Kumar, Diane Morrison, John Rasmussen, Arts and Sciences, Brent Stewart,
Peter Vitaliano, Jon Blake, ALUW Representative, Sam Dworkin, Emeritus Faculty,
Susan Camber, Assistant Controller, Grant and Contract Accounting, Kerry Kahl,
Director, Purchasing and Stores, Carol Zuiches, Assistant Vice Provost for Research,
Grant and Contract Services, Ginger McMahan, Department of Health Services, PSO
Representative,
Craig Hogan, Vice President for Research

Absent: Anna Kartsonis, Jaromir Ruzicka, Mehmet Sarikaya, Stewart Tolnay, Daniel
Vogt, Gail Stygall, Legislative Rep, Sun Oh Hahm, ASUW Representative, Malcolm
Parks, Associate Vice Provost for Research

Guests: Barbara Perry, Director, Federal Governmental Relations

1. Housekeeping: Kiyak asked everyone to respond to a request for winter schedules as
soon as they receive it. She updated members on Recorder Linda Fullerton’s accident
and potential absence during the coming month.

2. Presentation by Barbara Perry, Federal Government Relations: NIH Issues

Ms. Perry focused her remarks on the political perspective since the academic
issues have been covered in other forums. This entire strategy of targeting
“questionable” NIH grants began as part of an election bid. The amendment to de-fund
grants was not circulated to affected constituencies prior to its introduction so many were
blind-sided. Thereafter, the higher education lobby was very active in educating
Congress about the peer review process, seeing this as preferable and more
understandable than a grant-by-grant defense. It also sought to educate Congress
about the safeguards built into the review and funding process for grants. At the same
time, this issue got a lot of play in the media.

Then, the Coalition for Traditional Values developed an even larger list of grants
and delivered it to Congressional Representatives to use in their election efforts. There
was also a joint hearing of the House and Senate committees to look at NIH, the peer
review process, and the allocation of funds. Three favorable witnesses appeared, and
Sen. Murray (D-WA) was also present. At the hearing, it became clear that the
representatives understood the public health reasons for some of the grants, but asked
Dr. Zuniga to help them make this process transparent to constituents. Representatives
are clearly torn between electoral pressures from constituents and their understanding of
the issue. NIH has promised to do a better job in educating the public as well as being
more careful in their framing of the abstracts that describe the research.

Now, the feeling is that the momentum on this issue has shifted from Congress to
the NIH. The agency has begun conversations with its principal investigators; these
contacts caused an uproar in the academic community. The fear at this point is that if
the academic community begins an active political campaign, the Coalition for
Traditional Values will have to respond in kind. The reality is that there are 60 research
universities but 435 members of the House, and this issue, in her opinion, has to be kept
off of the Hill. Thus, most lobbyists from research universities are working with NIH to be more proactive and informative to the larger community.

Discussion/

Hogan agreed, but also pointed out that we don’t want to cede this issue to the right wing. Heath asked whether we could be helpful by releasing press releases about these grants and “playing it straight.” Perry responded that because our delegation supported us, and our local media understand the research university culture, we should be cautious; an active campaign may not be necessary. Also, she pointed out that one has to be careful with any concerted campaign because it is so easy to lose control of an issue or media campaign. Kiyak pointed out that it’s necessary to make clear the public health benefits of grants. Morrison suggested that she thinks that this goes beyond grant titles, and that somehow information about grants and proprietary information is being leaked. She is also concerned about how concerned many of her colleagues in Social Work are about this kind of investigation. Perry thought that alleged violations of the law should be pursued with NIH.

Perry also pointed out that this issue achieves varying degrees of understanding about the peer review process and funding of research. Voters in districts without a research university tend not to understand these issues. This have/have-not issue appeared in the hearings. Vaughn pointed out the need for faculty to be willing to volunteer for service on peer review committees, given the possibility of agency culture change during this administration. Similarly, Perry noted that a faculty member during a recent interview for a high level NIH appointment was asked more political questions than has been typical. Perry, in response to a question, confirmed that she also works with professional research organizations and scientific societies to coordinate their response on this issue. She also pointed out that there cannot be a uniform approach to responding to this issue because of the variations from locality to locality; any campaign has to be sensitive to its region. In some cases, it may be best to be silent.

Kiyak alerted the council to an op-ed piece that Hogan and Parks have prepared titled “Health and Truth are Traditional Values Too” that will appear in the PI (she requested that the Vice Provost’s office send the article to FCR members). Perry noted that there will not be big increases in the NIH budget. She says the funding picture isn’t good (3% for NIH and 6-8% for NSF) because of the budget deficit and the war in Iraq. She also foresees that intellectual property issues will move to the fore; and confirmed that the “doubling promise” for funding has been fulfilled.

The discussion with Perry ended with some ideas of the best ways to ensure a two-way information flow between Perry and faculty researchers. It was agreed that archiving past reports by Perry to the UW community would serve as a useful information source for future use.

3. Presentation by Gail Stygall, Faculty Legislative Representative: Washington Issues

In the upcoming short session, Stygall pointed out that three things will probably affect the University in this session:

A. The establishment of workgroups pursuant to H.B. 2076: Education Master Plan (not the HEC Board’s) and H.B. 2111. Meeting over the summer, data generated in both groups revealed the need to issue more degrees at both the undergraduate and graduate/professional level.

Another outcome of more data about long-term educational needs is the campaign by the League of Education Voters for a P-16 funding initiative of $1 billion dollars from a 1% increase in the sales tax. Half of these funds, however, are earmarked for K-12
class size relief. She urged faculty to attend League meetings and speak up for the interests of higher education.

This data has also sparked a conversation about what to do with the university student “bulge” that is expected to peak with the class entering in fall, 2008. The legislature has not taken a definitive stance on this. This is part of an increase of 35,000 students to be spread between the community colleges and four-year colleges. The bottom line is that we are not ready for this massive influx of undergraduates. The proposed HEC Board plan lists access as the number one priority, and paradoxically in her mind, funding for these students as fourth. There will be public meetings, and faculty are asked to give testimony.

The workgroup for 2111 focuses on education compacts, an interest of Pres. Huntsman’s. He hopes to obtain a greater degree of autonomy for the UW to set its own tuition and governance. These efforts have generally not been successful in other states as they place accountability measures on universities but then do not follow through with funding. We have agreed to be a pilot in this effort.

The two groups are working in tandem. The 2111 group is waiting for funding and enrollment decisions to be made for 2076 before determining accountability measures. Stygall asked for faculty help in the following respects: Faculty in the health sciences are asked to scan the pending bills to spot those that affect medical and health care and research. If they see such bills, she asked that she be contacted so that she can track them and weigh in. These measures tend to be in bills on public health, agriculture, fisheries and criminal justice. She pointed out that it may also be useful to have a pertinent faculty perspective for the legislators.

Hogan asked if there has been any conversation about an initiative to support research funding, with funding from the tobacco settlement. It would also be tied to economic stimulation. Kiyak noted that there have also been discussions about the federal underground research proposals through the NSF. Kiyak suggested this is something that could benefit from state support. The leading site is near Leavenworth. To be coordinated by multiple universities, researchers would be looking for dark matter, and other events.

Council members briefly discussed the possibility of inviting legislators Kenny and Sommers to a meeting in the near future, and of having faculty brief these members on research projects that could benefit from state funding and at least awareness by the legislature of their value to the state.

Blake asked about developments on the capitol side of the budget. Stygall replied that we are in somewhat of an awkward position because JLARK data shows that we underutilize our classroom facilities. Community colleges show 136% utilization and our figures are more like 76%. FCUFS is also working on this issue. There are also some difficulties with the ways in which our existing buildings are rated for their usability. Distance learning continues to be a live issue, and Stygall has to explain continually to the legislators that it is typically as costly as traditional classroom instruction, both for the provider and the student, who needs to have a computer ready for high speed internet access.

4. Kerry Kahl – Survey Results from Purchasing and Stores

Referring to a Spring 2003 survey of faculty, Kahl was delighted to find that the faculty view Purchasing as an ethical department, but that access needs to be improved as well as timeliness in responding to inquiries and requests. A faculty/administrator purchasing advising committee to improve performance is being formed, which will include members of the FCR. The results of the survey have been shared with all staff, and the staff have committed to making some changes in their procedures. For example, they have
adopted a hunting technology for phone calls and will be updating their web pages. They will also develop purchasing teams that can respond to requests more effectively. They did hire one new person this summer to support research needs. Kiyak noted that one of FCR’s functions is to support staff needs in this area. Additionally, they are working at developing better relationships with other campus groups to improve services, and are encouraging wider use of e-procurement.

Another big change will be civil service reform for classified staff. It permits contracting out for services to current employees or outside, private employers. Kahl explained some of the changes that will be taking places and the current timeline for complying with the statute. There was some discussion of the human resource effects of this legislation.

Finally, the Office of Naval Research Procurement conducted its tri-annual review, and he will give the final report to the council when it becomes available.

5. **Report on Research Advisory Board – Kiyak and Hogan**  
Kiyak prefaced Hogan’s remarks by reminding the council of reorganization efforts to create university councils rather than faculty-only councils. Noting how much communication already exists between the administration and the faculty on research, she reiterated Senate leadership beliefs that the best way to fulfill the University Council idea is to continue shared communication. Hogan agreed, saying that they have backed away from forming a larger University Research Council and are pleased with current arrangements of active participation by the Vice Provost’s office on the FCR. Along these lines, FCR members will be getting minutes from the Research Advisory Board.

The other thing that will happen is that units like Grants and Contracts will have faculty advisory committees to ensure that there is regular contact with “customers.” Heath interjected that these appointments should come through the Senate so that there is a guarantee that these faculty members speak for the entire faculty rather than as individuals. Vaughn explained the new way they will maintain a database and seek faculty interests as well as council preferences. Kiyak noted that these arrangements may vary over time depending upon the personalities of the various players, but that she has been quite satisfied with current arrangements.

*Adjourned at 10:04 a.m. with a reminder that our last meeting of the quarter is on Dec. 18 @8:30 a.m.*