Texas A&M Faculty Senate Research Committee
2013-2014 Report

Preliminaries

Faculty Senate Research Committee (FSRC) is one of the ten standing committees of Faculty Senate of Texas A&M University described by Faculty Senate Bylaws.

Jurisdiction: FSRC has the responsibility to study policies, procedures, and regulations and to recommend actions in (1) External funding of research, (2) Internal funding and distribution of research funds, (3) Travel related to soliciting, conducting, and presentation of research, (4) Libraries, computing, and other support facilities affecting the environment, (5) Publication or other means of disseminating research findings, (6) Copyrights and patents, and (7) Other matters affecting the conduct and dissemination of research.

Membership: Committee members are appointed by the Speaker, annually, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the consent of the Senate among faculty senators based on their preferences.

Current Members: During 2013-2014, FSRC had 21 members representing almost any college in Texas A&M University. The following is the list of all FSRC members in alphabetical order based on their last names and their colleges.

1. Akleman, Ergun (Chair), Architecture
2. Bessac, Bret, Pharmacy
3. Carlson, Richard, Geology
4. Castro, Luis Filipe, Liberal Arts
5. Darbha, Swaroop, Engineering
6. De Ruiter, Darryl, Liberal Arts
7. Ezell, Margaret, Liberal Arts
8. Gill, Clare, Animal Science
9. Gonzalez, Elsa, Education
10. Langari, Reza, Engineering
11. Liu, Wenshe, Science
12. Opperman, Lynne, Hsc
13. Popescu, Sorin, Agrilife
15. Rowell, Eric, Science
16. Sare, Laura, Libraries
17. Sezgin, Ergin, Science
18. Schneiderman, Emet, Hsc
19. Shaw, Robert, Agrilife
20. Uster, Halit, Engineering
21. Woodman, Richard, Business
Meetings: Committee meets every first Monday of the month 3:00 pm, Dean of Faculties Conference room -108 YMCA Building with majority of members.

Chair: The chair of FSRC is elected during the first meeting of the New Year by members of FSRC. The current chair of research committee is Ergun Akleman and his term will end at January 2015.

Chair’s Responsibilities: Chair represents Faculty Senate in Council of Principle Investigators (CPI), University Research Council (URC) and Principal Investigator Faculty Advisory Committee (PIVAC) meetings. Chair organizes every meeting and prepares the agenda with the help of the members.

Activities in 2013-14

The following list provides the meetings and discussions during meetings.

September 2nd, 2013, Meeting:

Just before the meeting, Debbie Phair, from concur operational team, informed us that the new receipt requirements for travel is announced. FSRC played a key role in creating new receipt requirements in 2012-13. Many people now benefit from the new and less restrictive requirements.

We discussed that the changes in IT services will be one issue that will be important 2013-14. We briefly discussed that because of the vast differences in systems and procedures in different department and college IT services, we can have face unexpected consequences. It may, therefore, be good idea to start to discuss about the possible issues different colleges and departments can face.

We have also discussed to include new members non-voting members outside of Senate such that we can have members from departments/colleges who are not represented in FSRC. This idea is rejected.

October 7th, 2013, Meeting:

We have invited Dr. Jon Mogford, who is Vice Chancellor for Research in The Texas A&M University System to the meeting. We have prepared a set of questions for him to discuss during the meeting. During meeting, we discussed The Extend of IT Centralization, Process of IT Centralization, Email Consolidation, Cloud Based Computing, Backward compatibility, Passwords, and Local Support. Dr. Mogford provided some information about these issues and suggested to contact with Dr. Pierce Cantrell.

In the same meeting we also discussed the speculations on possible proposal about IDC returns. We, therefore, decided to ask Faculty Senate Speaker Walter Daugherity invite Provost Karan Watson to discuss this issue in Faculty Senate in the next meeting. Dr. Daugherity invited Dr. Watson to the next Faculty Senate meeting on October 14th and Dr. Watson came to meeting and gave an overview about the plan.

October 15th, 2013, New Members are appointed
New members from elected faculty senators are assigned to the committee. We send a welcome email and informed them that during 2012-13, we mostly work on Issues related with FCOI and Concur. Our work helped to simplify reporting travel expenses. During 2013-14, it seems that we will mostly work on IDC and IT issues. We also encourage them to introduce any issue that can be dealt with our committee.

We informed the new members that FSRC is different than Council of Principal Investigators (CPI) in the sense that it represents all faculty research in Texas A&M. Therefore, FSRC considers both sponsored and un-sponsored research conducted in Texas A&M.

Since some of the new members from HSC were outside of College Station, we decided to use TVVN, which is available in Dean of Faculties conference, in our meetings. Thanks to Faculty Senate administrative assistant Diane Bertinetti, who handled TVVN connections, we never had any problem in the meetings.

November 4th, 2013, Meeting:

To continue discussion IT issues, we have invited Dr. Pierce E. Cantrell, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Information Technology and the Chief Information Officer at Texas A&M University. Before the meeting, we send him a list of questions on IT services. Dr. Cantrell provided detailed responses to our concerns and assured us only commodity services such as email will be outsourced.

Dr. Lynne Opperman suggested to include a discussion of the Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC) in our next meeting.

December 2nd, 2013, Meeting:

Based on Dr. Opperman’s suggestion to discuss issues related technology commercialization, we invited Blake D. Petty, Assistant Vice President for Research, Innovation and Business Development. He gave us a powerpoint presentation that explain the role of his office in technology commercialization.

We decided to skip January meeting since many members may not be in College Station and decided to have chair election in February meeting and invite VPR to discuss IDC return proposal.

January 7th, 2014, Meeting: Cancelled – Email Only

Dr. Margaret Ezell proposed we ask the VPR to address what that reconfigured office is now doing to support the research activities that are categories of the Phase I evaluation process by AAU, namely fellowships, awards, and distinctions for those working in non-government funded research.

During 2011-12, we had decided to have stronger ties with CPI. As a result, for the last two years, Dr. Reza Langeri represented CPI in FSRC first as an observer then as senator. We asked Chair of CPI, Niall Slowey if more FSRC members can be guests in CPI meetings. He confirmed that CPI meetings are open for anyone to attend as an observer.

Dr. Ergun Akleman proposed to create a university-wide event run by faculty-senate that celebrates faculty research and promotes multi-disciplinary interaction. Since there are too many faculty and too little time, he proposed to use the "Fast-Forward" format that is now used in some conferences, in which presenters give a very brief overview of their papers that would be presented in the conference.
He wrote that such fast-forward events conclude in two hour at most. Fast-Forward is now one of the most popular events in ACM Computer Graphics conference and several other large conferences adapted the idea now.

**February 3rd, 2013, Meeting:**

We did not have any guest in this meeting.

We discussed Dr. Ezell’s proposal on the importance of faculty honors and scholarships as a research activity. We will find out what kind of services is provided to faculty to apply honors and scholarships; what are the problems; how the services can be improved

We discussed "fast forward" idea proposed by Dr. Akleman. There were some reservations but everybody was OK if we can gather information to find out if there is an interest to support such an event.

Dr. Akleman was elected as a chair of the committee as the only candidate.

Since there will be Faculty Senate UT+TAMU joint meeting on first Monday of March, we decided to cancel our next meeting. Dr. Deva Reddy suggested that we can have a doodle poll for a meeting time in March if necessary.

**February 10th, 2013, After Faculty Senate Meeting**

Since new IDC proposal is announced a week before, we decided to hold a March meeting. We asked Dr. Glen Lain, interim Vice President for Research, if he is interested to come our meeting to discuss the proposal on IDC distribution. He said he will be happy to join us to talk about details. Since our regular meeting time is occupied by UT+A&M annual joint faculty senate meeting, we had a doodle poll for the first week of May.

**March 6th, 2014, Meeting:**

We had meeting with Dr. Glen Lain, interim Vice President for Research. He explained the details of new IDC distribution. We also discussed the importance of faculty honors and scholarships and "fast forward" idea briefly.

We decided to give a presentation to Faculty Senate about new IDC distribution policy.

**April 7th, 2014, Meeting:**

We prepared our report to Faculty Senate on Indirect Returns.

Katherine Rojo del Busto, Associate Vice President for Research, Research Compliance Officer, gave a presentation on updated information regarding research compliance. She updated the committee on the following items: (1) Draft of new System Regulation - Use of Biohazards in Research, (2) Draft of new System Regulation - Use of Animals in Research, (3) Research Compliance Training, (4) Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Procedures on Un-Manned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs, Drones). The committee later
gave an input to Mrs. del Busto and she used our input to give a feedback to system in revising new policies.

April 14th, 2014, Faculty Meeting:

We made a powerpoint presentation on the new policy on indirect returns by outlining the whole history. Attached, please find the powerpoint presentation.

May 14th, 2014, Faculty Meeting:

We had another meeting with Dr. Glen Lain, interim Vice President for Research, and continued to discuss the details of new IDC distribution, faculty honors and scholarships issues.

We decided not to have another meeting during Summer.
Facilities & Administrative Earnings

A Presentation by Faculty Senate Research Committee

Contents

- Summary of the New Model
- Comparison of the new model for TAMU and HSC
- Comparison of the model for TEES and Agrilife
- Discussion of newly Research Development Fund
A Little bit of History

- On January 8th, 2014 CPI meeting, Dr. Glen A. Laine, Interim Vice President for Research announced that the university is evaluating of the distribution model of indirect returns.

- He explained that “indirect returns” are formally called Facilities & Administrative (F&A) earnings and the state law requires F&A earnings can only be used for research related activities.
A Little bit of History

He pointed to three interconnected observations:

- University was not successful in attracting extremely large grants.
- F&A earnings is not supposed to support non-research activities.
- TAMU PI’s “guaranteed” to get larger F&A portions than their colleagues in other peer institutions.
A Little bit of History

- The Research committee briefly discussed the possibility of the new model in the regular meeting on February 3rd 2014.
- At CPI Executive Committee (EC) meeting on February 5th Dr. Laine formally proposed a new model for the distribution of Facilities & Administrative (F&A) earnings.
A Little bit of History

- The proposed model was made available on February 7th at http://cpi.tamu.edu/resources/rdf_draft.pdf/
- Dr. Laine presented the new proposal at Faculty Senate regular meeting on February 10\textsuperscript{th} and CPI regular meeting on February 12\textsuperscript{th}, 2014.
A Little bit of History

- There were many concerns with suggested proposal.
- Research committee decided to call an additional meeting and invited Dr. Laine to the meeting. We had a very informative discussion with Dr. Lain on March 6th.
- Committee members also participated CPI sponsored open forum on March 7th (2 - 4 p.m.) Rudder Tower.
The New Model is approved

- On April 2nd, Dr. Mark A. Hussey, Interim President, Texas A&M University formally announced that a new model for the distribution of Facilities & Administrative (F&A) earnings is established.

- The research committee discussed the new model on regular April meeting last Monday and decided to make a presentation about the new model.
The most important change is that the new model introduces a new fund called Research Development Fund.

15% of F&A earnings will be collected in this fund.

This fund will be used to build infrastructure that can attract “exceptionally large" grants.

Every system unit, i.e. TAMU, TEES, HSC and Agrilife, contributes to this fund.
New Model in a Nutshell

- %10 PI
- %15 Department
- %60 System Component *
- %15 Research Development Fund (RDF)

This model defines minimum guarantees. System components (*TAMU, TEES, HSC or Agrilife) can further distribute some money and departments can distribute their shares to PI’s.
An example: New TAMU model

- %10 PI
- %15 Department
- %20 College
- %40 VPR
- %15 Research Development Fund

* Same for HSC
Old Model for TAMU

- %15 PI
- %35 College
- %50 VPR
Comparison for TAMU

- %5 PI
+ %15 Department
- %15 College
- %10 VPR
+ %15 RDF
PI’s Loss or not?

☐ The departments (and colleges) are allowed to give the PIs much more than 10%.
☐ Therefore, although there is a concern among PIs about this 5% reduction, we observe that this problem can be resolved at the departmental level.
☐ The Committee observes that PIs in some departments can get a greater share of F&A than before.
Comparison for TEES or Agrilife

- TEES or Agrilife distribute its 60% only for research related activities.
- Therefore, we observe the new model will help both College of Engineering and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- The Committee observes that this may also be a gain for PIs in these two colleges.
Distribution of TEES’ 60%

- There is an ongoing discussion on the distribution of the TEES share of the IDC to the engineering departments and TEES research centers.
HSC RDF Special Case

- 15% of F&A funds from Brazos county-based projects will be added to the general RDF pool of TAMU.
- 15% of F&A funds from projects that are not Brazos county-based will have their own separate RDF and will not contribute to the general TAMU Brazos county RDF. Their RDF will be specific for the region the project is based.
RDF Management

The RDF Management Committee members will be:

- Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research,
- Deputy Director of Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, and
- Vice President for Research of Texas A&M University.
RDF Management

The RDF Management Committee will allocate the RDF after a process that calls upon input and prioritization of ideas from the

- Council of Principal Investigators,
- the University Research Council, and
- the Department Head Steering Committee.
Our position with RDF

- The Committee support the development of Research Development Fund in essence.
- On the other hand, we have some concerns.
- The Committee, in particular, observe that there is a lack of specifics regarding the usage of the funds.
Concerns with RDF

- The process for submitting applications for access to the funds, and of the distribution of funds is not that clear.
- We do not know how proposals will be reviewed, how the money is distributed for projects.
Our Suggestions

The Committee, therefore, strongly suggest that

- there should be a clear vision for the usage of funds
- there should be a well-defined, clear and transparent process for allocation of RDF
- there should be faculty representation (CPI?) on the management committee and
- a process should be developed for faculty initiated applications to RDF.
Questions and Discussions

- This is an ongoing process, please feel free to discuss ideas.