

University Research Council

Academic Year: 2014—2015

Summary of Meetings

There were two meetings held for the University Research Council (URC) during the 2014/2015 academic year. All other business during the year was transacted electronically via email or via one-on-one visits to Millican Hall.

URC Initial Meeting

The 2014-2015 University Research Council met for the first time on Tuesday, October 21 at 3p. The following participants were in attendance:

- Peter Delfyett
- Donna Neff
- Lei Zhai
- Bryant Nunez as proxy for Rudy McDaniel
- Paul Wiegand
- Mary Page
- Ella Bossy-Wetzel
- Bari Hoffman Ruddy
- Dodie Hajra

Introductions were provided, Paul Wiegand was elected chair of the committee, then three subcommittees were formed or discussed:

- Burnett Honors College subcommittee (Paul Wiegand [chair], Maureen Ambrose, Donna Neff, Matt Marino)
- UCF In-House Awards subcommittee (Lei Zhai [chair], Ella Bossy-Wetzel, Peter Delfyett, Tom Wan, Paul Wiegand, Bari Hoffman-Ruddy)
- Research Incentive Award (RIA) subcommittee (to be decided later)

The meeting concluded at 3:35p.

URC for Excellence in Research Nominees Meeting

The URC met on February 25 from 10a-11a at Millican Hall to discuss rankings for the Excellence in Research Nominees. Individual URC member rankings were compiled and selections were made and submitted. Additionally, the council discussed issues related to the general criteria for these awards—in particular the extent to which total grant dollars earned by applicants might overshadow other criteria either implicitly or explicitly. It was generally agreed that this should not be the overwhelming factor and was suggested that future instructions should make the priority of the various criteria clearer in this respect.

Summary of Issues or Topics Addressed

Activities of the URC during the 2014/2015 academic year included the following:

1. Review and make suggestions for **Burnett Honors College grant applications**. There were five grant applications. Rankings and feedback were provided back to the college in November 2014.
2. Formation of a **RIA** subcommittee was formed in December 2015 (Rudy McDaniel [chair], Gita Sukthankar, Maureen Ambrose). Rankings and comments were provided in January 2015.
3. Formation of a subcommittee for **Institute and Center Nominees** in February 2015 (Tom Wan, Lei Zhai, Peter Delfyett), as well as review and selection of a nominee.
4. Review and make suggestions for **UCF In-House Awards** November 2014—January 2015. Rankings and comments were provided in January 2015.
5. Review and make suggestions for **Excellence in Research Nominees**. All URC members reviewed binders one-on-one at Millican Hall in February 2015. The final rankings were subsequently submitted.
6. Review and make suggestions for **Burnett Honors College Summer Grants** in April 2015 (conducted by Mary Page, Ella Bossy-Wetzel and Paul Wiegand). Rankings and comments for the four applications were provided at that time.

Recommendations & Outcomes

The University Research Council recommends that all instructions and criteria for high-prestige faculty awards (e.g., Excellence in Research) be clarified so that the priority of the various criteria are clearer. In particular, there is concern that total grant dollars earned can become a proxy criteria that overshadows other conditions. This is problematic on several levels; however, the biggest concern is that the overall scale of funding is very different in different disciplines. Consequently, it appears unlikely that (for example) someone from a field in which typical grants are on the order of tens or hundreds of thousands can ever compete with faculty from fields where typical grants are on the order of millions of dollars, no matter what their portfolio is. It may be worth considering splitting such awards or, at least, clarifying the importance of grant funding in the overall evaluation criteria.