Research Council
2018-2019 Annual Report

The Research Council met three times during the 2018-2019 academic year on September 12, 2018, November 29, 2018, and February 7, 2019. Below is a summary of the committees' actions.

The committee elected Christopher Emrich as chair and Penny Beile as the vice chair.

Presentations

Council members were provided with an IRB update by the Graduate and Research Information Technology (GRIT) team. The presentation covered the UCF Program Timeline and the Huron platform for hosting IRB. Key accomplishments included onboarding the IRB team, collaborating to pull together successfully disparate data feeds, developing a communication plan, configuring Shibboleth for single sign-on authentication, and conducting a mini-Discovery session with Environmental Health and Safety.

Associate General Counsel Sandra Sovinski made a presentation regarding the need for a UCF publication policy. The policy would be pointed to in the grants submission process and is a response to private funder pressure to delay dissemination due to unfavorable findings or market advantage. The policy would be favorable to UCF researchers. Devising the policy will be an iterative process, with faculty, committee, and OGC review and involvement.

Discussions

Discussions by the Council included:
- The Faculty Senate assigned two topics to the committee. These include devising a different method to assess the Research Excellence award and IRB speed and efficiency.
    - The committee discussed extending the University Excellence in Research award to three awards. See recommendation below.
    - Significant improvements in IRB speed and efficiency were shared. In addition to the new system (Huron), the unit was reorganized and members cross-trained. Before this, the backlog was 178 submissions in the queue and a three-month wait to 26 submissions in the queue and a three-day wait. A 15-minute video for faculty and graduate students is also available.
- The Council also discussed the need to provide training and guidelines on research misconduct, especially as it relates to ethical and transparent research, developing a plagiarism policy and a "golden rule" for graduate students, and repercussions for failing to follow IRB requirements. IRB infractions range from fabrication and falsification of information and data to not reporting serious events.
- Another discussion topic was how to respond to the issue of funding deliverables not being met. Dollar amounts increased from $2.5M last year to $4.0M this year. The funds owed is to UCF from companies is because deliverables have not been paid. One idea was to have colleges stand for debt while another was to send to a collection agency. A report is going to college deans, with the expectation that more discussion will be forthcoming.
- ORC has been working with UCF IT to stand up a private domain that is more secure than the enterprise system.
- Congressional letters of support for grants writing go through ORC, who reviews and then sends forward based on congressional preferences.
- Grant submission process; EH&S review must go through the Office of Research central office.

- Seed funding to help support junior faculty. Outcomes of the discussion were to form a group to look at models and present back to the committee, but I don't think this gained much traction. Chris may have more as I have a note that he volunteered to work on this.
- MTA (material transfer agreements) and legal review process. A question was brought before the committee to see if the MTA process could be expedited. One researcher noted that it was taking a long time for legal review and comments. A Human Tissue MTA is under discussion, which may help expedite the process for agreements falling into this category. All other MTAs will still need to be reviewed individually to determine rights, ownership, funding requirements, intellectual property, etc. An MTA request form would be helpful, plus a way to see where the request is in the system.

Excellence in Research Award Selection

A sub-committee of the research council independently assessed, scored, discussed, and ultimately selected the University Excellence in Research Awardee. A friendly suggestion about more deliberately defining scoring procedures using empirical measures was presented to the entire research council by the sub-committee. It was determined that such a scoring procedure would be beneficial but that it would also be (possibly) inherently biased toward more empirical disciplines over more theoretical disciplines.

Announcements

Dr. Klonoff announced that the Faculty Senate elevated the Research Council from a Joint Committee and Council to a Senate Operational Committee. The Senate administers operational committees while the divisions administer Joint Committees and Councils. Starting in the Fall, the Council will meet monthly, and responsibilities of the Compliance Committee will be included in the work of the Council.

Recommendations

The Council discussed extending the single University Research award to three awards. Primary recommendations included:

a. Changing the name of the award to University Excellence in Creativity, Research, and Scholarship.
b. Increase the awards up to three to represent:
    1. Physical and Life Sciences.
    2. Social and Behavioral Sciences.
    3. Creative, Performance, and Applied Disciplines.
c. Each college would be able to send one folder forward for each award with applicants self-selecting the category.
d. The changes will require updates to the submission directions.
e. The changes would also require bargaining because of the links to monetary compensation. Vicki Loerzel volunteered to draft a proposal for review by Faculty Excellence and the BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Team.

During the discussion, some dissatisfaction with the current selection rubric was expressed, including varying interpretations of the rubric categories. The consensus appeared to be that the same criteria would be used with all award categories. Also, instead of adding more criteria, the council felt that applicants should make a case for the value of contributions (e.g., include journal prestige proxies in the narrative, i.e., journal impact factor, citation counts, etc.). Additional suggestions included returning the folder if the applicant doesn't follow directions, to only include the last three years of activity on the CV, and to have the applicant justify why they selected the award category.