

Research Council

Minutes for meeting of February 19, 2024, 4:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

Chair: Dr. Linda Walters, Vice-Chair: Dr. David Luna

1. Call to Order at 4:00pm

2. Roll call was replaced with noting people as they entered the Zoom meeting. In attendance were: Walters, Luna, Canova, Bogart, Ann M, Yalim, Macuszonok, Turgut, Eadens, López Castillo, Johnson, Fevzi, Weremchuk, Weich, Mansy, Kuhns, Listengarten, Winningham, Coffee, Kapucu, Yu, Delfyett, Azevedo, Khondaker, Norris, Sonmez, Kuebler, Ge.

3. Approval of Minutes. Approval of minutes from 2/5/24 meeting were approved.

4. Recognition of guests. Kathleen Winningham (Senior Director of the Knights Experience Team), Chad Macuszonok (Assistant Vice President of Research IT), Jason Kuhns (Database and Business Intelligence Manager).

5. Announcements:

A research space allocation task force has been formed. Winston Schoenfeld will come to the 3/4/24 Research Council meeting to discuss allocation policy and procedures. Walters asks Research Council members to prepare questions, which could be emailed to Walters ahead of time.

A future topic for discussion (no date set yet) will be graduate students' use of AI to write theses/dissertations.

6. Old Business. No old business was discussed.

7. New Business:

Topic: Intake System Project

Winningham: The purpose of this project is to alleviate the administrative burden on faculty and staff of key financial and human resource tasks. Winningham is seeking feedback regarding how to improve processes for purchasing and hiring personnel. The objective is to be able to request and track where purchasing and hiring requests are in the system.

Launch date is between May-August 2024.

Welch: It is difficult to search a large database (in Workday). One main problem is Amazon purchases. It is very very difficult. Is it possible to bring back Business Accounts for purchases?

Ann M.: The process for hiring is too slow. We lose candidates for this reason.

Winningham: Those are two topics that they are working on. In particular, to be able to track where the delays/bottlenecks are.

Walters: Hiring undergraduate students is a big problem, especially during Summer. Workday is very difficult for this purpose.

Sonmez: Winningham's team should talk to HR and College staff who work on these issues every day. OIE and HR are bottlenecks. Workday is not necessarily the problem. Problems with hiring faculty are widely known among the higher level administration, but no solution has been put forward yet.

Kuebler: Faculty use Workday infrequently so it is difficult to navigate even if they were trained in the past. Instead of implementing a new system to find information and track processes down, can we just do this person-to-person?

Winningham: A new self-service system would be more resource-efficient.

Kuebler: Was Workday meant to be a user interface or to have another system mediate between Workday and faculty users?

Winningham: The transition to Workday was very quick, so it was difficult to foresee training and modifications needed.

Canovas: Workday was indeed meant to be a self-service tool but it is hard to navigate so other institutions have developed their own front ends.

Kuebler: Workday can be very counterintuitive so we may need a mediating interface.

Topic: Project Vienna

Macuszonok: Project Vienna will substitute Paris. It is a researcher-centric tool to find financial data on research projects.

Kuhns: What questions would you like answered by Vienna? UCF is requesting bids to build the system and aiming to have a spec sheet by Q1 of 2025.

Kuhns demonstrates the PowerBI platform, which is tool to display high-level financial data. Asks what kind of financial variables members of the Research Council would be interested in, to get a high-level picture of funding. For example, burn rate scenarios if someone is hired or drilling down a project's financials by expense category. Vienna would be able to answer what-if questions.

Kuhns: What kind of what-if scenarios would we want to explore?

Kuebler: It would be useful to know, at the department level, how much funding is being generated, for Promotion and Tenure purposes.

Also, it would be helpful to know what the actual amounts and encumbrances are, in order to reserve funds (e.g., to hire personnel) prior to grant expiration. How much money is in the "bank" now and how much will there be in the future?

Macuszonok: They are working on these issues. It will take time to develop these tools.

Khondaker: Vienna could help identify potential collaborators in specific areas of research.

Macuszonok: The end game of Vienna is to make it the main interface for anything research-related, such as grant administration and IRB. Huron would not be used any more. He wants continued feedback. They will come back to the Research Council for more feedback.

Harrington: They need specific feedback to make systems better. For instance: "I was trying to do X and had Y problem." This is the most useful format to provide feedback to the teams working on these systems.

8. Other Business: No other business was discussed.

9. Adjournment at 5:01pm.