

Research Council

Minutes for meeting of October 9, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

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

1. Call to Order at 4:01pm

2. **Roll call** was replaced with noting people as they entered the Zoom meeting. In attendance were: Walters, Luna, Khondaker, Gesquiere, Shillingford, Yalim, Giurgescu, Eadens, López Castillo, Johnson, Okumus, Bochenek, Mansy, Garibay, Listengarten, Coffee, Yu, Kumar, Norris, French, Kuebler, Jurca.

3. **Approval of Minutes.** Minutes from 9/25/23 meeting were approved.

4. **Recognition of guests.** Saiful Khondaker (UCF Interim Assistant Vice President for Research Advancement).

5. Announcements:

Walters makes two announcements:

- Reminder about the session with Gerald Hector on 10/12, 4-5pm, to discuss Workday issues brought up by Council's constituent faculty.
- Library is eliminating text material. If anyone has resources they need, they should let their senate representative know before it is too late. There will be another faculty forum on this topic in the future.

Walters introduces Saiful Khondaker, who will discuss the Large/Complex Proposal Development section of the draft of the Research Enterprise Plan and seek input.

6. **Old Business.** No old business was discussed.

7. New Business:

Khondaker explains that the University's goal is to increase the amount of grants obtained by faculty by 2027, to be consistent with the UCF strategic plan. Most current grants are below \$500k, but most of the total awarded to faculty comes from grants over \$5 million. The University would like to increase the number of large proposals.

The question therefore is "how can UCF support large proposal submission and funding?". Some points mentioned by Khondaker are: Help to identify opportunities;

assist with interdisciplinary teams; create strategic plans for teams; provide seed funding, and salary support for PIs for proposal development. Other initiatives are the creation of Research Strategy Councils.

Kumar: We need to increase the number of faculty who bring in funding. Currently, the culture is that new faculty develop smaller proposals. This culture needs to change. One option is to create groups with existing and new faculty to develop large proposals. A potential problem is that competition for large grants is significant. We may need to team up with other Universities. We also need to recruit more senior faculty in addition to junior faculty.

Walters: The University needs to specify who would have access to the resources for large/complex grants; who decides which proposals are big enough.

Khondaker: proposals need to be complex, not necessarily large. Researchers are encouraged to contact Khondaker (OR) for clarification as needed.

Walters: OR should add graphics experts on staff that faculty developing medium-to-large proposals can use as a resource.

Coffee: NIH should be added as a funding source to the document, as it is an important funding source for the medical school.

Eadens: It is important too consider how many people are applying for grants to encourage more to apply. Evaluation of faculty should be changed across colleges to encourage grant writing.

Luna: We should not impose incentive structures on colleges where grant writing is not part of the research process. Not every field of scholarship is consistent with or requires external grants.

Bochenek: University should align with the Federal government's research priorities. More information about those priorities is needed. We need to incentivize the development of large grants.

Khondaker: We could have forums for faculty interested in large proposals to discuss areas of strength and interest.

Kuebler: Faculty do not have time or support to attend additional meetings. The University (OR) first needs to add staff support for administrative tasks. For instance, staff are needed to help faculty create budgets. Systems of faculty support are dysfunctional. OR should listen to faculty's suggestions on how to improve administrative systems. More staff is needed to lessen the administrative load of faculty, so faculty can do what they are best at.

Walters: Clusters and Strategic Research Councils are not on the same topics. If we have a cluster, it should also be considered a strategic priority.

Ge: The University should invite Program Directors to give talks on campus. It should encourage cross-disciplinary teaching as a way to create teams for large proposals.

Gesquiere: UCF should encourage collaboration across Universities, which are typical of many large proposals. OR has been decimated over the years. Support was better in 2005. Faculty have doubts about whether UCF could actually support large grants if awarded. There is no investment in infrastructure. Also, neither UCF nor our State legislators are plugged into Washington to ensure that funds are channeled toward Florida and UCF.

Khondaker: there has been a renewed focus on lobbying.

Garibay: OR could be more proactive to identify solicitations and put together a team of researchers who can fit particular solicitations. UCF should strategically build strengths and then use them to target specific grants.

8. Other Business. No other business was discussed.

9. Adjournment at 4:58pm.