Research Council

Minutes for meeting of September 25, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting

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

1. Call to Order at 4:02pm

2. Roll call was replaced with noting people as they entered the Zoom meeting. In attendance were: Walters, Luna, Harrington, Gesquiere, Miller, Shillingford, Yalim, Turgut, Eadens, Johnson, Weremchuk, Parks, Ge, Mansy, Garibay, Brisset, Gajentan, Coffee, Kapucu, Yu, Delfyett, Kumar, Azevedo, Norris, French, Sonmez, Kuebler, Jurca.

3. Approval of Minutes. Minutes from 9/11/23 meeting were approved.

4. Recognition of guests. Joseph Harrington (UCF Interim Associate VP for Research).

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. Please send issues to be discussed to Linda Walters by 10/6.

- Artificial Intelligence in research. Council still waiting to hear from administration about specific topics to be addressed by the Council.

Walters introduces Joseph Harrington, who will discuss the Infrastructure Investment section of the draft of the Research Enterprise Plan and seek input.

6. Old Business. No old business was discussed.

7. New Business:

Harrington mentions that historically, UCF has had problems with renovation efficiency (time and cost). Going forward, they will try to address those problems.

Several new buildings are planned, but Research buildings are further out in the future. Harrington discusses the possibility that we may need more buildings/facilities for research activities that are not currently done, especially as new faculty/researchers join

the University and larger grants are targeted. Another consideration is that grant administrators should be housed close to the research activities under their purview.

Miller: At the School of Communication, they need facilities for film scholarship.

Listengarten: The plan needs to include spaces that are jointly used by research, teaching, and performance activities.

Kuebler: A question to be asked is how can we make existing faculty more productive. Harrington mentions this was partly addressed at the last meeting. For example, initiatives could include a center to support large grant proposals, release time to work on large proposals, unburden faculty from administrative tasks (according to Harrington, this is a strategic-level issue, including Workday).

Garibay: Artificial Intelligence should be included as a research priority. It is a growing area with increasing grants.

Harrington: Should UCF provide professional development on AI topics?

Kuebler: The University should not take resources from other areas for that purpose. New resources/funds should be used for professional development. It may be better to ask people "what is stopping you from research on AI?" Then, provide resources for researchers to educate/research on AI. One possibility could be matching funds.

Eadens: University-provided professional development in AI might be helpful in addition to having people search for their own.

Luna: Small grants for behavioral researchers to be trained in analysis of large data (Natural Language Processing tools, etc.) should be made available to facilitate research in AI-related topics or with AI tools.

Johnson: Grad student housing is a problem.

Walters: It is also a problem for postdocs.

Miller: International graduate students should receive help in finding housing to help them onboard faster.

Walters: Chemistry and Biology buildings need to be replaced. Just renovating them will likely not suffice.

Harrington: Is there any work that needs to be contracted out because we don't have the facilities to do it in house?

Walters: One example of such work is genetic sequencing. If it could be done in house, it would add to UCF's stature in the field. Maybe one floor of a building would suffice.

Mansy: Software needs to be available centrally (e.g., MATLAB)

Kuebler: It maybe be more cost effective to have it available centrally. Also, high performance computing needs to be supported and expanded.

8. Other Business. No other business was discussed.

9. Adjournment at 5:02pm.