CSM Research Council Minutes

Meeting held November 1, 2023, 2–3pm

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November 6, 2023

Members present: Mark Eberhart (chair), Mark Deinert, Matt Morgan, Seth Vuletich, Jim Simmons, Beth Reddy, Hussein Amery, John Spear, Yvette Kuiper, Emmanuel De Moor, Erdal Ozkan, Steve Pankavich, Diego Gomez-Gualdron, Annalise Maughan, Mike Wakin, Lisa Kinzel, Carson Snow, Joice Hu.

Action items

- ☐ Last year, Mara Green handled logistics and meetings, and maintained the Research Council (RC) webpage. She's no longer with CSM. Waiting on her replacement to provide website maintenance info.
- ☐ (not urgent) Investigate combining RC and Research Advisory Board; subcommittee for this?
    - ☐ Identify scope of each, assess overlap, update at December meeting
- ☐ Followup with Mike Kaufman about status of Mines Research Initiative Program
- ☐ Reform subcommittee (4-5 people; more the merrier for # of nominations and recusing members) for research awards in December to review nominations
- ☐ Reform subcommittee for Research Instrumentation Awards (3 RC members and 3 lab coordinators)
- ☐ Reform subcommittee for research lecture series
- ☐ Invite SIF team to update RC on shared instrumentation database efforts

Issues/activities from last year

Lecture series (Steve Pankavich)

- Events: Research fusion (around 10 talks) in Spring and research lecture in Fall
- Always the previous winners of the Junior/Senior Research Award giving the lectures
- Apparently successful; no hard numbers for effects on actual research numbers (# pubs in collab etc.)
- Steve willing to chair since Jamal Rustami left
- Need to push events to Spring due to current delay in RC progress

Graduate stipend

- Last year, graduate student stipends were increased in order to improve recruitment and keep pace with cost of living.
- RC was supportive of raising stipends, but had concerns about the decision-making process and how the increases would be budgeted for.
- RC requested more information and plans on how existing grants with fixed budgets would handle the additional costs.
- This request for information was not addressed prior to the final decision being made.
- RC did not feel their voice was fully heard or reacted to, though they were not necessarily opposed to stipend increases in principle.
- There was uncertainty among faculty about how to fund the new higher stipend levels on existing grants.
- An explanation was given that the administration determined faculty were "sitting on" enough grant funding that could be utilized for the stipend increases.

- Process seemed rushed with limited faculty consultation, but the end goal of higher stipends was generally supported. Concerns remained about how to implement the increases within fixed grant budgets.

Research mentoring

- An initiative discussed last year but not much progress was made.
- There are some separate mentoring efforts happening through department heads and RAB.
- RC feels there is still a need for more organized mentoring, particularly for new faculty.
- Ideas were mentioned such as helping faculty develop online profiles, webpages, and research portfolios.
- It was noted that coordinating among the various mentoring efforts already happening would be a good starting point.
- No specific mentoring program was proposed, but RC expressed interest in promoting mentoring, especially for new faculty.
- Developing better web/online presence was mentioned as a goal that aligns with the R1 ambitions.
- Faculty surveys being done by RAB could help identify needs and opportunities related to mentoring.
- RC is interested in improving research mentoring but specifics remain to be determined based on feedback from faculty and alignment with other initiatives.

Mines Research Initiative Program

- This was an incentive program discussed in previous years that would provide extra salary incentives based on research expenditures and other budget criteria.
- Developed by Mike Kaufman and Johanna Egan.
- The sense was that this program was still in flux and not an active priority for the Research Council at this time.

Mines Excellence in Research Awards

- RC is responsible for making recommendations for these awards each year. There is both a Junior and Senior researcher award.
- Nominations are currently open for this year's awards, with a deadline of December 15th.
- Call for nominations was sent out via the Provost's office, but nominations do not go through the RC website.
- In December, RC will identify members to serve on the review subcommittee for the awards.
- It was noted that the subcommittee should have more members than last year (only 3) to avoid conflicts of interest if nominations come from a member's own department.
- Goal is to have the subcommittee in place by December so they are ready to start reviews as soon as nominations come in.

Research Instrumentation Award

- RC oversees the Research Instrumentation Award process annually.
- Award funding is available - $60K from the RAB budget plus additional funds from the deans.
- In December, the RC will finalize the review committee, likely 3 RC members and 3 lab coordinators.
- Fall and spring award cycles will be combined into one cycle this year.
- Goal is getting the committee set so the award process can begin promptly.

Shared instrumentation committee

- The RC previously had a committee examining shared research instrumentation.
- Separate from FOM management system
- The Shared Instrumentation Facility (SIF) management team is already working on cataloging and promoting shared instruments.
- The SIF will be invited to brief the RC on their efforts.
- The RC will coordinate with the SIF team on this initiative going forward.

Discussion: Research Advisory Board (RAB)

- Started (and continues via dept. reps.) as a way for the president's office to more directly hear from research faculty
- **Contrast to RC**
  - RAB is focused on higher-level, institution-wide research issues that can be solved quickly from the executive end of the power chain
  - RC is focused on the issues of CSM researchers, at the moment, that can lead to recommendations to the senate on how to improve things from this end, e.g. via changes to the faculty handbook
  - Previously RAB was suspended because there was too much perceived overlap with RC
  - Opinions
    * Could be merged with RC. One group, that meets and then reports to both the senate and the VP & RTT; websites etc. could come form RC just as well
    * If there's a dedicated person with RAB working on e.g. website, that's fine, but they can report to combined RC+RAB; still do not need separate deliberative body thinking about these; we should be that body
    * RC by the faculty, for the faculty, while RAB works for RTT office. Goals and work should align, so let's guarantee that by combining them
    * Explicit overlap between RC and RAB (members sitting on both; both reporting to depts) is unnecessary if they were combined
    * Insofar as things like campus space/resource management and research efforts, RC should be (in) the same room as RAB
    * CSM research has grown over the years, providing room for bureaucratic growth, even if the concepts overlap, the scopes do not
- **Current operations**
  - Part of "pillars" model being used in CSM research enterprise marketing effort
  - Presidential subcommittee reporting to Walt
  - Working on internal database for quickly searching faculty based on e.g. research keywords, by surveying faculty.
  - RAB rep. for each dept. should be updating on this and other RAB matters at dept meetings, (and reporting on department feedback).
  - RAB subcommittees
    * Surveying faculty for database
    * Research resources; optimizing research access to staff/support
    * Research challenges; fixing/unifying procedural issues with e.g. research travel policy