

**University of Massachusetts Amherst
Research Council of the Faculty Senate
William Patterson, Chair
2007-2008
Minutes
September 7, 2007**

PRESENT: J. Adams, L. Button, C. Clifton, A. Foulkes, W. Gerace, J. Kent-Braun, J. Miller, D. Ostendorf, W. Patterson, P. Utgoff, A. Mangels, L. Shea, P. Cormier, P. Kostecki, M. Malone, B. McCandless, J. Schafer, H. Woodcock

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

The Minutes of the September 7, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously.

Vice Provost Paul Kostecki stated that the life sciences initiative is going full force. UMass Amherst is fully engaged with the President's Office in putting together a package with the other campuses to compete for the Governor's life science dollars. Discussions are underway with Facilities Planning for the construction of a new animal care facility. The University has committed \$6.8M for this facility. An animal activist conference will be taking place at Hampshire College this coming week-end. Kostecki has been in touch with Lorna Peterson of Five Colleges, Inc., as well as UMass campus police and Hampshire College officials. UMass animal facilities will be carefully monitored during this period. A system-wide Renewable Energy Working Group, chaired by Kostecki, has been generated by the President's Office. The group is putting together a white paper to present UMass achievements in renewable energy to the State.

Andy Mangels, representing Administration and Finance, talked about the installation of a Workplace Learning and Development training/certificate program offered to administrators about the grant and contract process. There will also be series dealing with budgets, human resources, and financial transactions. Kostecki asked Mangels if a faculty member was able to check their RTF online. Mangels stated that faculty members are able to access their grant budgets online. He also announced that A&F is working on a directory/yellow pages type guide for staff/faculty that will be a thorough how-to-do-it for University policy and procedures.

Linda Shea, Chair of the Graduate Council, stated that a committee had been formed and is scheduled to meet on October 22 to discuss the downward trend of RAs.

Jacqui Watrous and Will Shea from Administration and Finance were invited to the Research Council to discuss and get the Council's comments/concerns on a UMass Amherst Sponsored Activity Effort Reporting system. Watrous explained that in prior years annual certification of salary compensation by sponsored project was determined when a packet containing a letter of explanation, survey and cost sharing form have been distributed manually to college business managers. This current method, which has been

unchanged for over 20 years, has several limitations—accounting for 100% of a PIs time is not allowed for with the existing survey process; the annual effort reporting process does not provide a specific picture of effort during each segment of the year (i.e., academic/summer); reports are often signed by staff other than PIs due to lack of access to hard copies; cost sharing is not traced back to proposed amounts; substantial follow-up is required to collect all surveys. Shea explained that the revised process would implement a PeopleSoft Report which lists compensation detail by PI with percentages attributed to funds and sponsored projects. It would utilize Research Accounting Department cost sharing data to assist in verifying cost-share survey data and provide PIs/ business managers with revised instructional materials. The Research Council questioned whether this report would cover a 9 month academic year or 12 month period. Watrous and Shea answered questions, noted serious concerns of RC members about effort reporting percentages and thanked the RC for its input.

Carol Sprague reported on the success of the WL&D workshop on Pre-Award Administration Certificate Training.

Hilary Woodcock talked about the success of the mid-level administrative animal care position recently filled stating that citations are down markedly on recent animal inspections. Also the tests on the new Electronic Protocol Management System have proven successful.

Jay Schafer reported that a letter has been sent to Department Head/Chairs regarding electronic journals. The University will purchase about 1,000 of these journals. The e-journals will be archived for future use.

OLD BUSINESS: RC Chair Patterson gave a brief update on the Executive Advisory Committee whose members include Faculty Senate Council/Committees and union members. He will attend as many meeting as he can and report back.

NEW BUSINESS: The Policy Committee has had its first meeting with another scheduled for the coming week. Bill Gerace is the Committee Chair. Discussion items include: Action taken by Whitmore on 20 faculty hires—a committee has been put together to help sort thru hiring plans of the Deans; a sensitive research proposal is close to completion and should be available for the Committee by its next meeting; Gerace is interested in continuing discussion regarding interdisciplinary research; Patterson expressed an interest in the Council being informed regarding what the University does to ensure the retention of successful new faculty hires and asked for comments. We might get someone like Mary Deane Sorcinelli come speak with us on this. The Policy Committee will take up the selection of next year's RC Chair.

The Council adjourned at 10:30 a.m.