

**University of Massachusetts Amherst
Research Council of the Faculty Senate
Paul Utgoff, Chair
2005-2006
Minutes
November 4, 2005**

PRESENT: C. Clifton, K. Danai, A. Foulkes, D. Gilbert, N. Khan, P. Kostecki, M. Lowance, A. Mangels, E. May, B. McCandless, J. Mullin, D. Ostendorf, W. Patterson, S. Scarpati, C. Sprague, L. Sievert, J. Swinney, M. Taunton, P. Utgoff, H. Woodcock, J. Zamora

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

The Minutes of the October 14, 2005 meeting were unanimously approved.

Vice Provost for Research Paul Kostecki, representing the Provost, announced the importance of and timeline for the National Research Council's (NRC) Assessment of Doctoral Programs. The survey will evaluate doctoral programs from a research perspective. The Office of Research will take the lead on this campus. The data collected will be used to construct a large database that will permit comparisons of programs within and across universities.

The Office of Research, through its Research Liaison and Development (RL&D) office, has put together a comprehensive list of research equipment and facilities (REFS). This web-based reference page will serve as a tool for researchers to search for on-campus equipment and services.

VPR Kostecki asked the Research Council for advice on a presentation he is scheduled to make on November 15 to the Board of Trustees subcommittee on Science & Technology on how to expand the research capacity of the system. The goal of the President's Office is to increase research dollars over a five-year period from \$350M to \$650M. This calculates to 15% growth per year per unit. The VPR has asked Deans to send him a list of positives and negatives to conducting research on our campus. Research Council members will contact the VPR with their concerns and suggestions that include: retention of faculty, numbers of faculty, library, travel money, lab space and post-award support.

Andy Mangels, representing Administration and Finance, reported that the process for retroactive payment for the July 02 to July 03 period has been approved. In a discussion with Vice Chancellor Joyce Hatch regarding the status of salary increases on grants, it was estimated that the University should be able to recover \$200-300K from active grants. He also reported that the PeopleSoft finance system upgrade is scheduled for October 2006. Concurrent with the upgrade will be a new grants module.

Graduate Dean John Mullin reported that in conjunction with the NRC survey, the Graduate School will develop a comprehensive system of tracking the status of Ph.D. students. The result should be an understanding and strengthening in the retention of doctoral students. Dean Mullin also announced that the Graduate School will focus its NEAGEP (Northeast Alliance for the Graduate Education and the Professoriate) efforts on what was termed the "south" side of campus.

(These are programs in the humanities and fine arts, education, social and behavioral sciences most of whom are housed on the south side of campus.) NEAGEP recruits, supports and mentors minority and underrepresented students. There are more minority graduate students in the sciences and engineering than in the “south” and the Graduate School is actively trying to emphasize minority growth in those areas. The Graduate School is continuing its consideration of several new certificate programs including one in Qualitative Studies and one in Islamic Studies with the hope that these certificate programs will lead to the establishment of Centers/Institutes.

Dave Ostendorf questioned the Board of Trustee’s plan to increase UMass system’s research growth by 15% per year considering how difficult it has been to increase growth by the current 3%. He also asked if there was a correlation between rising fees and a 7% reduction in Research Assistants. The Graduate Dean will study whether this is a one-time event or if this decline has occurred over several years.

Lynnette Leidy Sievert, Chair of the Research Policy Committee, updated the Council on RPC activities including the web-based showcase and the role the Research Council should play in research mentoring of new faculty. Graduate Dean Mullin stated that the Graduate School would like to collaborate on new faculty mentoring.

Carol Sprague, OGCA Director reported that the Annual Report will soon be available on the web.

Hilary Woodcock, Compliance Officer, reported that the NIH animal assurance document is in process and will be sent to the Chancellor and VPR this month. Also, her office is working on the twice annual animal care report to the Chancellor. The Chemical Safety Committee is working on the lab safety manual.

Jean Swinney, Chair of the Research Centers Committee, stated that the Committee is determining if the Provost has any interest in this project. Bruce McCandless will find out the guidelines/criteria established for research centers and institutes. The Committee will determine how centers and institutes are established and evaluated at the University of Illinois (Champagne-Urbana) and the University of Wisconsin. To coordinate with the Chancellor’s plan to have our campus benchmark against Indiana-Bloomington and UC Berkeley, the Research Council requested that these two universities be included with the effort. This plan was accepted. Nigar Khan completed the task establishing which links are viable on our research center and institute list.

Charles Clifton, Chair of the Responsible Conduct of Research Committee (RCR), reported that the Committee agreed that the ultimate goal of this committee will be to reduce the risk that members of the University community violate agreed-upon standards of responsible conduct of research. The goal of the committee will be to identify gaps in UMass policies and practices and to make recommendations toward correcting any shortcomings. The analysis will be organized in terms of key areas of RCR awareness outlined in the Office of Research Integrity’s Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research. Dean Mullin requested that a member of his staff be assigned to the RCR Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.