

University of Tennessee Research Council

October 15, 2007

Eighth Floor Board Room, Andy Holt Tower

3:30 p.m.

Attending:

Joanne M. Hall, Chair	Carol Malkemus
Bill Blass, Vice-Chair	Thandi Onami
Pauline Bayne	Ken Phillips
Tim L. Cross	Gina Pighetti
Ramon DeGennaro	Greg Reed
Denny Dukes	Barry Rouse
Brad Fenwick	Johanna Stiebert
Randall Gentry	Carol Tenopir
Glenn Graber	Tse-Wei Wang
Barbara Klinkhammer	GSS – Brandice Green
Vena Long	GSS – Valentina Kuznetsova

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from September 24, 2007 were approved as submitted with no changes.

Opening Comments

Joanne Hall welcomed those present and commented on the ability of the Research Council to be an important focus of dialogue at this crucial time with issues concerning system and campus.

Bill Blass asked for a show of hands from faculty and commended their participation. He stressed that faculty attendance will be crucial as task forces begin to become active.

Greg Reed, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, gave a progress report on the search for Web Developer. Until that person is in place and begins work on rebuilding the website, Greg would personally like to be informed of dead links or other website problems.

Brad Fenwick, Vice Chancellor for Research, reported that he is scheduled to meet with Deans over the next few weeks. His goal is to accelerate his learning process. He does not feel that circumstances allow for what might normally be a one year process. UT may be at a “tipping point” in charting its course for the future. The Research Council is an important part of his learning resources, and no voice is more important than faculty.

Committee Chair Reports

There were no committee chair reports.

New Business

Resolution Honoring Professor Doug Birdwell

Bill Blass introduced and Council unanimously approved a resolution thanking Professor Doug Birdwell for his years of service as Chair, Vice-Chair, and for hosting the Research Council website from 2000 to 2005.

Goal Setting: Discussion

Joanne invited a continuation of the goal-setting discussion which started at the last meeting. Focus: “What does the Research Council believe is most important and achievable during the coming year?”

EQUIPMENT

- The issue of out-dated, “primitive” equipment was raised. Several faculty members spoke regarding the increasing severity of the problem: difficulties attracting or retaining quality faculty, inability to compete successfully for research dollars, and a serious road-block to doing cutting-edge research. Several questions and ideas were discussed, including lottery for research, the possibility of approaching non-profits directly, and whether or not a portion of overhead return dollars could be set aside for equipment. There was also discussion about how to direct some of the focus of UT’s current fund-raising campaign toward this problem.
- Brad Fenwick described some of the creative ways top tier universities deal with this challenge. UT needs to learn to operate similarly to those we aspire to be like. In some states, the legislature has set up a trust fund for equipment. Some universities depreciate equipment which allows time to slowly grow a fund for replacement. He said that overhead return is an issue, but that none of the top 30 return more than 7-12% to the college – the remainder is pooled and used as needed over the entire campus.
- Joanne suggested that one of the committees could take on the equipment problem as a goal for the coming year.

Federal Circular 21

Bill said that the Council can play an important role in making the administration aware of the difficulty of operating under A21. He asks that members email him their ideas.

Granting Agencies Not Paying Overhead

Some granting agencies such as the Gates Foundation do not fund overhead. Therefore, only universities that can afford to cost-share will get these types of awards. Brad said that the important question in these cases is whether or not the agency has a standing

policy, or can it be negotiated. Vena said that in these situations it is often possible to get something paid for the department – infrastructure, etc.

Cherokee Farms

Randy Gentry briefed members on the recent Cherokee Farms planning committee meeting. He was asked by David Patterson to sit on the planning committee as the Research Council representative. Information presented at the planning meeting concerned archaeological studies of the site, areas of interest and buildings planned. The three areas of interest are: a) medical research, b) vet school research, and c) computational science (emphasis on weather). Three buildings are being discussed: 1) Private – Ron Nutt (CTI), 2) Joint Institute for Advanced Materials, and 3) To be determined. Randy feels that there is a voice for the Research Council in the process, and he suggests putting together some smart ideas which he could take to the planning committee.

David Patterson clarified the position of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee which is gravely concerned about the Cherokee Farms issue. He referenced the Faculty Handbook which states that faculty has a say in the use of facilities. He also stressed that the master plan approved by the Board of Trustees aligns Cherokee Farms with the campus. The Executive Committee is drafting a resolution which will ask the President to dissolve the current Cherokee Farms planning committee, and create a new committee with appropriate representation.

Brad Fenwick commented that we lose capacity in delay as the ability to build erodes rapidly as costs rise. He cited some examples of universities with enterprise campuses which are very successful.

Discussion followed regarding the distance of Cherokee Farms from the main campus, the need to improve what we have before building new, and to what extent RC could get involved in the planning process with the existing planning committee.

Old Business:

Time did not allow for items of old business. They will be carried forward to the next agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer M. Hall

Action Items

1. Tse Wei Wang: Progress on HR limits to salaries of contract employees
2. Greg Reed: Policy on Research Data & Tangible research Property