

The University of Tennessee
Faculty Senate Research Council
Minutes of the Meeting
March 10, 2021

Elected Members present:

Dallas Donahoe, Yanfei Gao, Julia Jaekel (Chair), Xueping Li, Brian Long, Vasileios Maroulas, Tore Olsson, Sean Schaeffer, Alisa Schoenbach, and Soren Sorensen

Ex-Officio Members present:

Suzie Allard, David Anderson, Deborah Crawford, Bill Dunne, Michael Kilbey, Michael Higdon, Larry McKay, Holly Mercer, Josh Price, Holly Raynor, Joel Reeves, Jennifer Webster, David White, and Tami Wyatt

ORE Members present:

Erin Chapin, Marc Gibson, Jean Mercer, Jon Phipps, Sarah Pruet, and Renee Thomas

Minutes: February minutes approved electronically

Call to order:

A regular meeting of the Faculty Senate Research Council was held via Zoom and Julia Jaekel called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

Welcome - Julia Jaekel, Chair

Please send any nominations for Research Council Chair to Dr. Jaekel.

New Business

Session Topic: Showcase research structures in the Social Sciences and Humanities, and discuss indicators and standards of productivity beyond external funding

Hollie Raynor, Associate Dean of Research, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

CEHHS has eight departments and the research done varies tremendously; see below. Most research is human focused, but some may be a combination of focuses of education, health and human sciences. Departments like Theory and Practice and Team Education have a traditional educational focus, traditional health focus departments in Nutrition and public health while other departments like Child and Family Studies cross across different areas.

- Child & Family Studies
- Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
- Educational Psychology and Counseling
- Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies
- Nutrition
- Public Health
- Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management
- Theory and Practice in Teach Education

CEHHS uses a socioecological model to showcase the research done in the college. It occurs from the cellular and molecular level, all the way through to a more policy focus level depending on obviously the department and the faculty members. The area of behavioral and social sciences is what incorporate most of the faculty.

- Public Policy – Federal guidelines of food supplemental programs
- Community – Social norms regarding education, diet, physical activity, hospitality
- Organizational – Schools, retail companies, healthcare
- Interpersonal – Parenting, home environment
- Individual – Diet, physical activity, physiological processes, genetics

Each department's by-laws set the expectations for scholarship evaluation and primarily focuses on quantity of output in peer reviewed journal articles. The new Dean is discussing within the college on how to address quality especially since this varies widely between departments, and what is the role of external funding. A search is now underway for an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Engagement: engaged scholarship, teaching, research and service. Changes will be reflected in college and department's by laws in the future. Engaged research and engaged teaching is based on the Carnegie classification for engagement for the University: Teaching, research and service activities that are done in partnership with community partners where there's a reciprocal relationship. For example, Nutrition researcher has a community partner in Cherokee Health Systems working together for NIH funding. The researcher translates interventions that are developed in research-based settings into a healthcare setting in which the healthcare providers are implementing the intervention in the system.

Tore Olsson, Associate Professor, History

There are active and impactful researchers at UTK but often the ways the larger University measures research success can make it difficult to recognize. Humanists work in a very different way that researchers in the STEM fields with different metrics. An historian can spend seven years (dissertation to book publication) on the history of agriculture science on the topic of the Green Revolution that was a major effort during the Cold War to promote increased agricultural production in the Third World. The amount of money attained was \$55,000 for a one-year fellowship. This is the max at this career stage. When measured against STEM scholars, it is laughable and miniscule in terms of one's record. However, there were other ways the research recognized with book awards, use in a history series documentary and serve as a consultant. When reflecting on 10 years of scholarship, the dollar amounts brought it are quite small in comparison, but the picture becomes more complicated when awards, public outreach, etc. are considered.

Alisa Schoenbach, Associate Professor, English

Humanities moves us forward by developing new languages to articulate experiences, new ways to understand and analyze the significance of discoveries, scientific discoveries are historical events and even feelings and preferences might be which makes this work notoriously hard to measure in part because it can take a long time to think through and execute a project and also humanities research has a strong element of serendipity and discovery, "You don't know what your looking for before you start looking for it.". Dissemination of ideas can be extraordinarily circuitous, and they can circulate through the books, articles and citations which is the general measure of achievement in the Humanities field. There is also invited talks, conference presentations and public facing writing which can become larger conversations.

Amy J. Elias, Director, University of Tennessee Humanities Center

The Humanities Center is not a department or college but a research center but represents 9 departments:

- Art
- Classics
- English
- History
- Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures
- Music
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Theatre

This is a diverse group that includes arts and humanities and with each of the departments there are very different ways of approaching research. Disciplinary research publication traditionally defined as an individual faculty's work by books and articles in refereed journals, conference papers, invited talks and digital projects. There are numerous ways to evaluate individual publication productivity including citation and indices. There can be radical disjunction of citation markers on academia.edu versus traditional databases of citations like Web of Science for example, one researcher has 16,000 views and 975 mentions versus web of science which indicates only eight. There is a problem for humanity scholars in terms of how product productivity is logged, how people read humanities work and the research dissemination platforms. The Humanities and STEM fields have different conceptions about research viability. Humanities ideas are subject to revision but necessarily subject to obsolescence. If a researcher has a good idea in humanities, it can survive the passage of time regardless about changes in the culture or technology. Humanities are increasingly working in teams to produce new work and increasingly working with STEM fields though how to measure that becomes difficult. Humanities work is meant to speak to living people, to add value to their lives personally, culturally, and socially. The professional disciplines recognize public education, impact, and influence as an indicator of productivity.

The National Humanities Alliance is the largest humanities advocacy organization in the US and it defines publicly engaged humanities initiatives with outreach, engaged research, engaged teaching, engaged public programming and the infrastructure of engagement that supports scholarship, degree programs, centers, funding opportunities, digital technologies, and curriculum reorientation initiatives. The American Academy of Arts & Sciences has a Humanities Indicators database to generate comprehensive statistical information for policymakers for researchers and policymakers in US private and public sectors. The first nationally representative survey was administered Fall of 2019 dedicated to the understanding Americans engagement with the humanities. One interesting finding was that many Americans do not recall being exposed to the humanities by their parents, and most adults wished they had taken more humanities courses in school. However, a substantial share of Americans has been hampered at work due to a deficiency in one or more humanities skills, though many do not think they need humanities skills in the workplace. Another interesting stat is that over two-thirds of humanities majors get jobs in the private sectors almost 60% of US CEOs have degrees in the humanities.

Larry McKay, Associate Dean of Research & Facilities, College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts & Sciences provides flexibility to departments and divisions to define scholarship relative to their discipline as well as annual reviews and for promotion and tenure process. The College and departments are assessed by external sources and have very highly ranked departments; nationally in the top 10 for long periods of time. Those departments are doing the right things and setting the right criteria for promotion and tenure because they could not sustain or move up in the rankings. Some disciplines are very specialized even within a department and many departments have recognition or engagement as a key part but those are hard to measure the impact. For example, a former UT faculty member who becomes a Poet Laureate of the United States or a film receives an Emmy Award for a documentary on addiction in Appalachia. Both have impact but it is difficult to assign a number to it. CAS has had strong success with highly competitive fellowships awards to prestigious universities like Princeton or Oxford. Faculty members spend a year on their campus working with them. It could be argued these fellowships are just as competitive as some of the most prestigious of science or engineering grants. CAS also provides zero teaching assignments to junior faculty as standard part of the job offer.

Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Paula Brown

Next Meeting: April 14, 2021