Committee on Research Minutes  
of the 10/03/12 meeting

Present:  Syed Akhter, Arthur Hefti, Jeanne Hossenlopp, Doug Lobner, Tim McMahon, David Papke, Jane Peterson, Robert Topp, Erik Ugland

Also Present:  Melody Baker (note taker), Kathy Durben (ORSP), Austin Fritsch (ORC), Kevin Gibson (Grad School)

Excused:  William Pink, Raj Rathore, Joe Schimmels

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Lobner at 9:05 a.m. The agenda was approved.

Reports:
Report from the Vice Provost for Research –
Dr. Hossenlopp announced that a faculty panel discussion, focused entirely on research, will be conducted this week with University Advancement. Kathy Durben will moderate the discussion.

Report from the Director of ORSP –
Ms. Durben distributed a handout of upcoming ORSP events, along with application and award figures. She will be asking COR members to serve as reviewers for the November 28th Forward Thinking Poster Session.

Report from ORC –
Mr. Fritsch reported that all research is currently in compliance, a new protocol has recently been posted for animal users, and a new ORC website will be coming soon.
Dr. Gibson announced that a Responsible Conduct of Research seminar is being offered on November 8 and 9 and is open to everyone.

New Business:
SFF/RRG applications –
Application packets were distributed at today’s meeting along with sample score sheets and the general procedures. Dr. Lobner discussed scoring methods and the review process, as well as common issues. The assignment position (primary, secondary) of reviewers was discussed and it was agreed that readers should not be assigned to the position of primary reviewer on proposals from their own department. The opinion is that it would be better to avoid a potential conflict or appearance of favoritism. It was suggested to assign that person as the secondary reviewer instead.

While discussing procedures, it was agreed that if a proposal does not follow the instructions it will not be considered (specifically with respect to page limits). A link to the SFF/RRG instructions will be sent to all members along with personalized score sheets for each of the three groups.

Ms. Durben mentioned that a prior awardee did not submit the required report. While the award agreement states that failure to submit a report would cause the applicant to be ineligible to apply again it does not specify a timeline. Members agreed that the document should be clarified to state that the applicant would be ineligible “until a report is received”.
Lastly, a budget for SFF/RRG awards will be established and shared with each group before the November 7th review meeting.

Strategic Planning – research and scholarship (review COR statement on research and PowerPoint summary of strategic goals) –

Dr. Lobner asked members for their opinion about holding a forum with other campus groups to decide research themes and what areas to emphasize at MU, as a task for the COR over the course of the next 6 months. Dr. Hossenlopp added that this will contribute towards the greater strategic planning effort and Fr. Pilarz’ intention to make sure that the plan is reflective of the MU community.

Starting conversations with other groups to gather good ideas would be helpful. It was pointed out that these conversations should not be used to create a list of demands, but rather a component for fostering research. The following opinions were offered for what should be discussed:

- What MU is about.
- How to be inclusive, yet focused enough to be meaningful.
- How to provide an environment to enable research. A new model may be necessary that is conducive to research.
- How to create the excitement to foster research needs.
- Justify research in terms of mission.
- Discuss advantages of identifying five research themes.
- Create substantive themes – connecting research to improve the lives of people in the area.
- Ask a fundamental question – what value does research have to MU? Who are we?
- Ask participants what the research themes are in their areas.

Dr. Lobner shared that the chair of UBGS wants to meet with the COR chair and discuss the possibility of a common event. Dr. Hossenlopp added that they are reaching out to other committees (teaching and undergraduate studies) also. Dr. McMahon agreed that it is important to link conversations among departments and shared how research is different in his department.

Members agreed to have forums and to ask people to come with some suggestions (how can we advance research), and to bring solutions (not problems). It was suggested to supplement the information gathered at forums by surveying deans. Dr. Hossenlopp added that if deans have posted their colleges’ strategic plan, additional information could be gathered there. The timeline for general discussion about the themes is to conclude probably around Thanksgiving, followed by more discussion of potential university priority areas during the first part of the spring semester.

A recommendation was made to hold a forum on two different days and times to enable as many as possible to participate. The two main questions for the forum should be:
1. How can research and scholarship be improved?
2. What are your college’s research themes? Where are areas of common interest across colleges?

It was recommended to provide a list of themes that have already been explored as an encouragement, and to avoid duplication. The forum should result in a deliverable at the end, even if it is only a list – which should then go directly to the coordinating committee. Dr. Hossenlopp recommended having an outside facilitator participate (who knows something
about MU) and suggested this could be co-sponsored with the UBGS. It was also suggested that graduate students would have a vested interest and also suggested to invite deans.

Dr. Lobner will work with the Graduate School and ORSP resources to set up the forum. A motion was made to advance the proposal to hold forums with the UBGS to discuss research themes, and seconded. A vote was taken and members were unanimously in favor. It was discussed that the forum will require heavy promotion, and a very clear explanation of what the goal of the forum is. It was also discussed that it would be a good idea for the members to gather data in their own units in the event of low turnout. Dr. Hossenlopp recommended that since a lot of time has already been spent on how to improve research, the COR should instead present what has already been listed and ask, what is missing.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.