Committee on Research Minutes
of the 12/10/14 meeting

Present: SuJean Choi, Kim Factor, Sarah Feldner, Jeanne Hossenlopp, Sarah Knox, Tim McMahon, Chris Okunseri, Chad Oldfather, Joe Schimmels, Robert Topp

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

Excused: Abdur Chowdhury, Kristy Nielson

The meeting was called to order by Dr. McMahon at 9:00 a.m. The agenda was approved.

Reports:
Report from the Vice Provost for Research –

Dr. Hossenlopp reported that the provost office is taking over the management of the strategic plan and reminded members that there are six themes with set goals and recommended objectives. For Research in Action, one objective is to achieve a higher Carnegie ranking. While MU has doubled reported research and development expenditures over the past five year, Dr. Hossenlopp would like to see it doubled again. MU remains flat in the number of PhD’s awarded. Recent changes within Carnegie may precipitate changes to the metrics, so she is not yet sure how that will reflect the ranking.

Dr. Hossenlopp is on the provost search committee and reported that final candidates will be on campus in January.

The Strategic Innovation Funds competition was launched last week and Dr. Hossenlopp encouraged everyone to consider submitting a pre-proposal. (Link: http://marquette.edu/innovation/ ) Applications should be in-line with the strategic plan. Dr. Hossenlopp briefly described the process and due dates, and noted that MU has budgeted $1 million per year towards innovation funds and will continue outside fundraising efforts as well. Applicants should know these funds are for one time awards and that an alternative method of funding should be planned by the applicant if the project is expected to be ongoing after the initial award.

Report from the Chair – no report

Report from the Director of ORSP –

Ms. Durben distributed a printed report of applications, awards, and licensing totals. She also reported that the annual Forward Thinking Poster Session and Colloquy was well attended and had about 60 entries. Of the entries that were judged, there were 3 winners. Colleges with winners offered to match the $1000.00 ORSP award.
Report from ORC (Ben/Austin) –

Mr. Kennedy reported that there was a good turnout at the IRB conference held at MSOE last month and described some of the topics presented. The conference was also a good networking opportunity.

Mr. Fritch reported that all is well in his department and congratulated the Biomedical Sciences department on their collaborative grant.

Business:
SFF/RRG final figures, improvements for next year –

Dr. McMahon reported the figures of applications received and awards made this year in comparison to last year, noting that this year set a record for award totals. He asked members for ideas on how to improve the process for next year. Comments:

- How to consider applicants that have other funding when making decisions to award SFFs. It is agreed that SFF’s will not go to people who already have summer funding. It was recommended to update the language in the application to make this explicit to the applicant, such as, “consideration for SFFs will be given to applicants that do not have summer funding”. Other opinion was for reviewers to have the flexibility to question investigators on their needs.

- Another member felt not all faculty know when it is appropriate to apply – when starting new work vs continuing started work (finishing a chapter). However, making a rule that this funding is for new projects would not work for the humanities.

- If the purpose of an SFF/RRG award is grant stimulation, ask in the application, “How will the work stimulate additional grant applications?” Consider rewording the question on the cover sheet about applying for external funding, “What external funding sources have you identified?” It was also recommended to add a line to the rubric making this explicit (that the applicant has identified other possible funding sources). Ms. Durben pointed out that she does not want searches for grant funding (which can take hours) to create extra work for ORSP just so faculty can answer a question on the application. Another member pointed out that first year faculty may not have had time to search for other sources of funding yet. Reword the question, “What other funding are you currently receiving?” with possible examples so that people will list (start-up funds, etc.).

- Create a short training process to help new COR members be better prepared for evaluating applications. A mock presentation would be helpful for new people. A primer or orientation at the meeting before the applications are electronically available would be helpful. Some veteran members did not want to take up an hour of committee meeting time for a training session so it was recommended to have training at the subcommittee level outside a regular meeting time for new members, especially those who have never reviewed a proposal or commented on one. Other members thought an overview of the process for evaluation at a meeting would be beneficial to everyone.
• It was also recommended to simplify the comments to applicants by coming up with a way to standardize them. This would also help new members.
• Instruct members ahead of the review meeting to have either a complete proposal electronically, or complete hard copy at the meeting. Thumb drives can also be provided by the graduate school with the files loaded on them as a backup. Files can also be projected on the screen from the SharePoint site with the note takers computer.

Dr. McMahon suggested that the COR continue this discussion to make updates in the spring semester with the goal of having the changes made by March.

Haggerty Award process (nominations packets distributed at this meeting) –
The process for ranking the nominations was reviewed. The benefits of making this award an electronic submission process were discussed and members are in favor. Anyone wanting a paper copy will print it out themselves.

Joint Forum –
Dr. McMahon asked the members for discussion topics for the Joint Faculty Forum which will be held on March 24th. It was recommended that once the pre-proposals for innovation funds come through, the COR could encourage themes that overlap with some of those ideas in an effort to build strategically. Members agree this is a good idea, particularly with applications that fall into the category of research. The pre-proposals could also be checked to see if there are clusters that are obvious, to recommend as areas to enhance.

Innovation Funds –
Dr. McMahon asked members if the COR should submit a proposal and if anyone had ideas on what could be proposed. Ideas included:
  • A plan to work on MU’s research publicity and image. Promote a venue or event to bridge the gap with the community. This could also lead to recruitment benefits.
  • Use the CTSI model to get interdisciplinary/inter-institutional collaboration. Create a way to advertise resources – create a network of information nodes. It was pointed out that the Task Force for Inter-professional Education will also be submitting applications.
  • A plan to help faculty in mid-career.

Dr. McMahon asked members to draft their ideas using the pre-proposal form available online and bring them to the meeting in January. Consider making mini-pitches for the idea.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25am.