Committee on Research Minutes
of the 3/8/17 meeting

Present: Sarah Feldner, Paul Gasser, Ryan Hanley, Andrew Hanson, Jeanne Hossenlopp, Matthew Mitten, Phillip Naylor, Chris Okunseri, Daniel Rowe
Also Present: Melody Baker (note taker), Kathy Durben (ORSP), Andrea Petrie (UA), Excused: Ron Coutu, Kristina Dreifuerst, Sarah Knox

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Okunseri at 9:03 a.m. The agenda was approved.

Reports:
Report from the Vice President for Research and Innovation –
Dr. Hossenlopp reported that she was in Florida last week for a series of MU fundraising events on the Gulf Coast. While there, she also attended the Ashoka U conference – MU is a designated Changemaker campus. Future additional fundraising events are being scheduled for Chicago and Beloit.

The grand opening for the 707 Hub is scheduled for March 27th. Dr. Hossenlopp asked members to watch for invite and plan on attending.

Lastly, at the Board of Trustees meeting last week, she gave an update on research to the Academic Excellence Committee that was well-received.

Report from the Director of ORSP –
Ms. Durben announced that Judy Kaiser had a baby boy on February 28th. The office will find out soon about an additional grants administrator hire for their office.

A document announcing funding opportunities, award applications, awards received, and licensing revenue was shared with members. Ms. Durben announced that final testing of the Kuali system will occur in March, with training sessions being offered in the months ahead.

Dr. Okunseri added that MU could possibly collaborate with MCW on the NIH opportunity for projects on minority health and disparities.

Report from ORC –
Dr. Hossenlopp reported that MU has engaged Flad Architects to create a plan for improving the animal facilities and allowing faculty research to grow while the BioDiscovery project is still in development. Workshops and conversations have been taking place during which some innovative ideas have been raised to handle the issue of an aging cage washing system. Dr. Hossenlopp also described some of the considerations that have to be taken into account regarding master planning and new construction.

Ms. Petrie added that the fundraising campaign for the master plan has been rolled out and described the process (the “quiet phase” and the “public phase”) which will be ongoing over several years.
Business:

Application and criteria improvements for Way Klingler Young Scholar and Fellowship applications –

Members discussed the application and process and that there were some challenges with evaluating applicants, particularly for members new to the committee. More clarity in the evaluation process would be helpful. Comments on this topic included:

- One member shared that he relies on the dean and chair letters for their input on the candidates.
- It is very difficult to compare faculty from different departments because there currently is no common denominator to make an objective determination.
- It would be helpful to know from a disciplinary perspective if the applicant is on track.
- It may be helpful to divide applications to readers by area of expertise in the manner that is done with the SFF/RRG applications.
- Some standard questions for the chairs and deans to answer may be helpful.
- Having the 3rd year review letters included are helpful because they are written for a different purpose.
- It would be helpful to know the relative weight of each of the criteria on the Young Scholar application. Can this be addressed by asking the deans or chairs to evaluate the candidate’s publications in relation to others in their field. A member shared what he looks for in a 3rd year review is the evaluation by the peers and comments on progress expectations. This gives some indication if the applicant is deserving of an award to reward/encourage. Another member commented that it still doesn’t convey how the person stands outside of MU relative to their peers.
- Perhaps the nominator would feel better about making two statements: Is the person making progress towards tenure, and, is the person making progress outside of MU.
- Rubrics are needed specifically for the purpose of the COR evaluation. What are measures of success in the department and in the broader arena (national norms), and what are expectations of the 3rd year review.
- Consider teaching loads and that a release may have a huge impact on someone who needs to make progress, opposed to someone who is already a superstar.
- With a rise in new faculty, a larger number of applications may become the norm.
- It was suggested to divide the awards among areas – Dr. Hossenlopp recommended doing this proportionally. There was some discussion about how/whether to advertise this. Also, breaking them out by discipline would possibly be a more equitable process of evaluation.
- The committee discussed whether ALL the COR members should read ALL applications. An increasingly large number is impractical for some. An argument
was made for dividing the reading because of the differences in expectations in teaching loads and abstracts.

• Should the COR have an opportunity to discuss the applications before voting?
• There is opinion that the value in everyone reading every application, is that it is a good experience for the members and is helpful to promote advocating for research on campus and what the barriers are in different areas of research.
• It may help to have more pointed questions for nominators (deans and chairs) to answer.

A motion was made to, “Divide the applications into 2 categories and give at least one award in each category: (1) Natural, Applied Sciences, and Engineering, and (2) Humanities and Social Sciences.” The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Another motion was made that, “The COR member will read all applications, discuss as a group, and then score.” The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Dr. Feldner offered to work on a rubric for this process this summer and will ask Dr. Gasser to work with her.

The application will be updated to emphasize that all pieces should be scanned into one complete document.

The COR agreed to use the same process for the Way Klingler Fellowship. Members were asked to discuss what the reasons might be keeping the social science faculty from applying for the fellowship:

Some faculty may feel they do not fit with the award categories (example Business would fit under Social Sciences). How many faculty would be eligible for this award? Is outreach needed to under applied departments? It is not obvious what the fund is for, so examples may be helpful to help people imagine what they could do with it.

It was suggested that an email from Dr. Hossenlopp to encourage departments to apply would be helpful. It was also decided that Dr. Hossenlopp will take these issues to the Dean’s Council for discussion and bring it back to the COR to discuss again.

It was recommended that, other than a report, perhaps hosting an event where awardees can talk about their research would be a good way to promote the award. An early fall event would be a good time to capture people’s attention ahead of the application process as a venue for publicizing and encouragement. The COR could also have events with members on hand to answer questions, possibly brown bag lunches. It was suggested to create a video that can be shared. Events should be scheduled this term and locations reserved.

SFF/RRG Evaluation Strategies –

Dr. Hossenlopp recommended waiting to discuss this at the September meeting for the benefit of new members. She will also bring someone in to talk about reviewer bias.

The meeting adjourned at 10:42.