

Research & Service Committee Report 2021-2022

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The Research and Service (R&S) committee worked with the office of Vice President for Research and Economic Development (OVPRED) and Vice President for Research & Economic Development (VPRED) and Faculty Senate (FS) Steering committee to facilitate the communication between faculty and research administration on research policies, including:

- The evaluation and new initiatives of UA research institutes and centers
- Internal Processing Form (IPF) policy and proposal submission
- Patent policy and faculty handbook updates
- Postdoc salary top ceiling issues
- Progress in response to the 2019 campus-wide research survey and recommendations made by the Faculty Senate Research and Service Committee in 2019.

Key items that the committee has communicated with the faculty and research administration are listed below:

June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VPRED met the FS Research & Service committee to discuss the policy of center/institute evaluation, specific metrics, and several recent UA research center/institute initiatives. • The five-year review of UA center/institute will consider the overarching criteria for BOT-designated research institutes and centers according to “Policy for Establishment and Periodic Review of Board of Trustee-Designated Research Institutes and Centers”. • A new IPF policy in Cayuse went into effect on June 1, 2021. The committee also briefly reviewed and discussed internal processing form policies. It should be noted that <i>“In extraordinary circumstances, the Lead PI may submit a written request to the AVP for Research to request that OSP move forward with proposal submission without an approved IPF”</i> if chairs and deans cannot sign the form on time, according to OSP.
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FS Research & Service committee met on August 31 to finalize our annual priorities, including 1) communication with the VPRED’s office to improve research policies and policy, 2) review and communication with faculty and VPRED’s office regarding center/ institute research opportunities and their evaluation policies, and 3) being engaged with the Graduate School regarding research-related graduate student programs and fellowships and other resources for research support. • VPRED shared the year 2 report for ORED’s 5-year strategic plan with the Research & Service committee https://news.ua.edu/2021/08/ua-research-marks-continued-progress-in-annual-report/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee met with VPRED and discussed various research & service topics, including 1) UA's "research expenditure" and % allocations of teaching/service/research towards research, 2) progress of UA centers and institutes, and 3) effort toward diversity issues for faculty positions. • VPRED updated two newly approved centers (Global Water Security Center and Point of Need Manufacture Center), and another drug discovery center under review by the BOT regarding convergence bioscience medicine, drug discovery/delivery led by Dr. Ravi Kumar.
September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee discussed issues raised by faculty regarding the postdoc salary maximum regulated at different units by HR for equity reason, although UA has no official maximum limit a postdoc salary. This was communicated with the provost and brought to further discussion with HR. It was found that HR looks at equity within the unit to make sure the proposed compensation to be offered will not cause unjustifiable equity issues within the unit, i.e., one post-doc in a unit being paid \$48K, and another in the same unit being paid i.e., \$65K. Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs contacted the committee and scheduled a meeting with HR to facilitate the discussion of this issue. The recommendation of the committee is to keep the minimum but remove the maximum ceiling limit for a postdoc salary. • The committee held a joint meeting with new Associate Provost Lesley Williams and Academic Affairs Committee to discuss two policies coming out of the Office of Research and Economic Development on copyrights and intellectual property (IP). • Cochair (Pan) was selected to serve on graduate school's Inclusive Excellence in Recruitment, Admission, and Support Sub-Committee
October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VPRED updated on the progress made in response to the 2019 campus-wide research survey and recommendations made by the Faculty Senate Research and Service Committee in 2019. • The committee contacted VPRED regarding some faculty concerns about proposal submission and communication with OSP specialists. These faculties think OSP is significantly understaffed or not being utilized correctly. For example, some faculty were frustrated by lack of response from OSP specialists that led to missed due dates for grant submissions. • OSP implemented a new approach to proposal submission assignments that utilizes the availability and experience of the entire team. While OSP will continue to have the main point of contact for most colleges/departments, proposal deadlines will be reviewed regularly and re-assigned to other team members when the "assigned" specialist has a high volume. Faculty will be contacted directly by the specialist if a proposal is re-assigned.
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee discussed the IP policies and made the final recommendations to the VPRED's office.

December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee briefly reviewed VPRED’s responses to the committee’s recommendations regarding the IP and copyright policies draft. • The committee also discussed internal funding opportunities such as RGC level 1-3, particularly small equipment funds that need to be identified to support faculty research not aligned with UA institute/centers.
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Vice President for Research Administration (Ms. Jennifer Camp) joined the Research & Service committee meeting and shared updates of grant submission policies and procedures, and partially addressed challenges of grant submission. • Subcontract proposal procedures were briefly discussed. It was indicated that clear communication between grant specialists and the PIs is needed to facilitate the process smoothly. Cost matching policies and procedures were briefly discussed and require PIs to work closely with the chairs and deans to agree on a cost match solution that is communicated with the grant specialist for submission with the IPF.
February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-award survey was distributed by Dr. John C Higginbotham to all research faculty on February 7 to glean feedback about how OSP policies and procures may be improved. Over 280 responses to the pre-award survey were received as of March 8, 2022. Preliminary analysis of the survey shows that the level of staffing in OSP not being adequate to address research growth, according to Assistant of VP Research, and OSP is actively recruiting candidates to fill vacant positions, including a new FY22 position that was created to address growth, • VPRED met the committee and updated progress of 1) AARC facilities support, 2) current and new centers and institutes and their annual/five year reviews, and 3) the pre-award survey. • The committee discussed the postdoc salary ceiling issue and reported the discussions with HR and the provost office about postdoc salary issues. • A new postdoc salary review/approval procedure is being drafted to help facilitate the communication between PIs, HR, and OSP. • The committee briefly discussed the new Graduate School Strategic Graduate Partnerships initiative led by Dr. Emmett Lodree, Director of Strategic Graduate Partnerships, to develop or expand summer programs for undergraduate students currently attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), to attract them to our graduate programs in the future.