

FACULTY SENATE RESEARCH & SERVICE COMMITTEE

2022-2023 Annual Report

- Stakeholder meeting of IRB. The committee organized a stakeholder meeting of the members of the Office for Research Compliance with faculty representatives and faculty senators on September 29 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm to discuss issues of UA's IRB policies. Thirty-five individuals from ORC and faculty engaged in a discussion of concerns regarding the IRB process. Both perspectives were shared with a focus on broader concerns, in addition to some focal troubleshooting. Faculty perceive higher levels of risk assessment and restrictive, localized rules. ORC insists that norms at the University of Alabama are consistent with other Universities. This fundamental disconnect is problematic and more dialogue and changes are needed to bring these perspectives together.
- Small Grant Program (SGP) of 2023. The committee met VP of Research Dr. Mumper and Ms. Jennifer Camp, Assistant VP for Research Administration to discuss internal small grant support and many issues of grant submission and post-award administration support services. Equipment grants (known as Level 3) were last awarded in 2018. In that year there were two equipment proposals received and both were awarded. The Level 3 award amount totaled \$121,191 with an additional \$122,067 for cost sharing. The committee learned that there were other possible ways to ask for small equipment (e.g., cost-sharing of College/departments/ORED, and small grants from institutes such as AWI). Dr. Mumper would like to have input from FS Research & Service committee regarding the small equipment grant program. ORED was open to suggestions from this committee on how small equipment grant requests can be fairly reviewed transparently and have broader returns over investments. Dr. Mumper also mentioned that almost \$10M in equipment and building renovation fund would be going through the BOT on September 15th-16th as part of the Materials Education and Characterization Renewal Initiative. Jennifer Camp also shared the recent funding rates of SGP in the past several years. The program received a total of 80 proposals and awarded 81.25% of the proposals in 2019 and the total dollar amount of the awards was \$376,696. In 2022, this program has a 35.19% funding rate and 54 submitted proposals and the total award amount was \$164,909.
- The committee discussed issues of OSP and C&G Accounting with Dr. Mumper and Ms. Camp such as late/slow new award account creations and lengthy processes to process a subcontract of a grant that negatively affects research activities and in some cases makes it impossible to hire students. We also discussed how to improve Advanced Spending Account requests and automated forms to help faculties who had successful awards but have issues with a late arrival of funding due to noncompetitive approval by PO.
- The committee has been engaged in conversation with VP of Research on limited resources of materials researchers and stressed the critical infrastructure needs in this area. As part of the ORED strategic plan, the Materials Education and Characterization Renewal Initiative have been approved by BOT to be part of a major core instrument teaching and research facility on the campus of The University of Alabama that will be managed by the Alabama Analytical Research Center (AARC) within the Office for Research & Economic Development (ORED). The total cost for space renovation and instrument acquisition is \$9,957,745 (paid entirely by ORED with \$4M paid upfront from research reserves \$6 M from the central reserve, and ORED to pay \$600K /year for 10 years). 1.8M of the total for renovations. The total includes 5 new instruments, costing ~\$8M, and valued at ~\$15M with a strong discount.
- The committee discussed with Dr. Mumper the status of 5 years review of ORED institutes and centers and review criteria. Five centers/institutes are reviewed annually. Policies and guidelines are located through the links below.
 - <https://research.ua.edu/institutes-centers/ic-guidelines-procedures/>
 - <https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uat/public/getdocUA.php?file=1>

- Evaluation criteria include 1) being financially sustainable, 2) including interdisciplinary research, 3) allowing the university to do what cannot be done in their absence, and 4) if primary work is research, not service.
- The committee responded to Dr. Lesley Williams Reid's request for feedback on the Faculty handbook revision regarding 1) patents and entrepreneurial activity related to the T & P candidate's discipline to the list of "examples of the types of scholarly and professional contributions that are considered" as part of the evaluation of a candidate's research productivity, and 2) the clarification of the relative contribution of a candidate to multi-authored work (the candidate should provide a statement establishing their contribution for each publication)"
- The committee launched an IRB survey in late Spring 2023. The results of the survey validated the concerns faculty that a smaller group of faculty voiced during the Fall 2022 stakeholder meeting. The results indicated that a strong majority of faculty feel that the IRB is a barrier to research and express concerns about timeliness of reviews, risk assessments, and procedures. In addition to an IRB assessment, the survey also assessed the overall research environment and showed additional opportunities for improvement.
- Dr. Michael Callihan and cochair Pan met Michael Arthur, Associate Dean for Research of UA Libraries, on January 19 to discuss possible supporting resources for Article Processing Charges (APC). Dean Arthur requested a list of publisher and journal names that request open access fees to share with his team to determine resources to support APCs.
- The committee met Dr. Susan Carvalho, Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate School, on February 15 along with Andrew Goodliffe, associate dean of graduate school to discuss faculty and graduate recruiting challenges and strategic plans for graduate education. Topics of the conversation include 1) Strategic Plan for Graduate Education 2022-2026, 2) challenges of graduate recruiting, 3) out-of-state tuition waiver, and 4) ChatGPT.
- At the 2/28/2023 meeting, Dr. Mumper highlighted initiatives and plans of the five-year strategic plan and items that are yet to be done. He used the plan to develop external and internal advisory boards for ORED as an example, neither of these boards is yet to be formed for a variety of reasons such as COVID interruption and delays, FS Research & Service committee also serves the function of this internal advisory board because it representing faculty broadly anyway, and regular meetings with ADRs and institute directors. Another plan ago about librarian space and aminal facility was identified as another missing progress to meet the growing research needs but need an internal measure to meet the need. Dr. Mumper is open to any particular topics suggested by this committee for his attention. When asked about the lack of staffing, Dr. Mumper mentioned there are two full-time FTEs and additional two student work (20 hours per week) was just approved to help operations as the satellite facility was created.
- The committee started a conversation with Dr. Mumper and then with Provost on potential book subvention programs. We recommended UA develop such funding support to meet the needs of our faculty in this area. This program would help faculty authors publish their books when their home departments and college are unable to provide sufficient support. The committee pulled together a list of schools that are offering subvention grant programs and shared it with Dr. Russ Mumper and the provost.
- In our March meeting, the committee also asked Dr. Russ Mumper questions regarding research lab space allocation/ plans especially as we grow. Dr. Mumper directed the committee to refer to the UA's space occupancy and allocation policy <https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uat/public/getdocUA.php?file=105> regarding research space request and assignment.