

Council on Research Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2010
Life Sciences Research Building, Conference Room 1143
9:30 am – 11:30 am

Members present: Lance Bosart, James Castracane, Richard Cunningham, Kirsten Davison, James Dias, Elaine Lasda-Bergman, David Lewis, Dale Morse, Robert Nakamura, and Kevin Tyle.

Members absent: Berhane Araia, Bharat Avasarala, Brian Butcher, Daniel Goodwin, Elizabeth Gaffney, Hamilton Lankford, and Eszter Szcalzer

Also attending: Adrienne Bonilla, Theresa Walker, and Robert Webster, Paul Agris, Edelgard Wulfert, and David McCaffrey

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair, James Castracane, at 9:35 am.

Approval of February 3 and March 3, 2010 Minutes

David Lewis motioned to approve the February and March meeting minutes; seconded by Lance Bosart. Motion passed unanimously.

James Castracane welcomed Nick Freeman, a graduate student in Psychology who was observing the meeting as a part of a seminar preparing students for the professoriate.

Institute for RNA Science and Technology (IRNAST)

(continuation of discussion regarding the proposal submitted for permanent institute status):

Question: What firewalls are in place if the institute encounters difficulty with funding?

Response: Paul Agris, Director of the Institute, responded that he is engaged in regular meetings regarding sustainability. The Institute's sustainability will be derived from a diversified funding source to include capital campaigns, partnerships with corporations, venture capital funds, donations, and a small fee from investigators using the center. The Institute is also receiving 11M+ annual income garnered by investigators affiliated with the Institute. Dean Wulfert indicated her support and concurred that IRNAST will not be a drain on the budget.

Question: Who are the 29 PIs referred to in the proposal?

Response: In addition to Drs. Paul Agris and Daniele Fabris, the 29 principal investigators will include faculty from UAlbany's Department of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, and School of Public Health; Wadsworth Center of the New York State Department of Health; Ordway Research Institute; and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. There are also six investigators from Rochester Institute of Technology.

It is expected that IRNAST will become a national resource where investigators can avail themselves of high end equipment. The Institute will provide a program supporting interdisciplinary pilot research grants, and investigators will be working toward obtaining funding for RNA training grants.

A motion was made to accept the committee's recommendation to approve the permanent status of the Institute. The Council's vote was unanimous.

Institute of Financial Market Regulation(IFMR)

The Institute of Financial Market Regulation is a low cost operation that is basically developmental. The Institute focuses on education, research and training on financial market regulations. It is an interdisciplinary collaboration of UAlbany, Albany Law School, and professionals in financial services, law and market regulation.

Question: What is the advantage of formal recognition for the Institute?

Response: David McCaffrey, Director of the Institute, explained that formal recognition will be a clear identity in terms of presence to and building ties with the outside world.

Question: Eighty percent (80%) of the Advisory Board membership is from the industry who claim to be able to self- regulate, but have had difficulty doing so in the past several years. Can you advise Council of the direction of research and where it's headed with no academicians on the advisory board? It appears as those being regulated are dictating what the regulations are.

Response: The Advisory Board consists of people from the industry. They can provide useful guidelines, but there will be no real improvement in understanding until we elevate reliability of systems that work within the industry. They will help improve systems so that financial markets become more transparent. UAlbany wants strong ties with the industry, but will certainly maintain its independence.

Question: What is the backup plan when the grants end next year?

Response: McCaffrey explained that the institute is not facility intensive; *all activities will be supported by external funds.* The long term goal is to become a national center for information; however, there will be no facility until there is money to support it.

The following is a breakdown of current funding sources for the Institute:

\$25,000 of the \$97,000 is from UAlbany selective investment

\$10,000 from undergraduate research support and NY Stock Exchange

\$40,000 from College of Computing Information research with IBM

Question: What is the timeline for instituting programs?

Response: Academic programs are now operating as a faculty initiative and are attracting students who would not have ordinarily gone into the field of financial regulations. There is currently no formal graduate program.

After the question and answer period, Robert Nakamura summarized Council's concerns into three main categories:

1. Organizational Structure and Accountability
2. Budgets
3. Maintaining independence

Mengbing Huang, Chair of the Centers/Institute/Labs Committee noted the Institute's major strengths are involvement and collaboration with Albany Law School; and, the likelihood for the Institute to be self-sufficient since they are maintaining a low level of funding. The committee, therefore, recommended that the Institute be considered for permanent recognition.

The motion was made to accept the committee's recommendation.

Vote: Yes – 4; No – 5; Abstention - 1

James Castracane asked the committee to convey the Council's concerns to David McCaffrey, Director of the Institute and request that the proposal be re-submitted.

Vice President for Research Report

The Annual Research Colloquium will be held on Wednesday, April 14 at 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Interim VP Dias referenced the handout of strategic goals of the research and asked the Council to review and comment. The first town hall meeting regarding research will be held on Monday, April 19, 2010.

NSF Survey

Robert Webster reported that UAlbany was selected by the NSF to participate in the pilot test of the Higher Education Research & Development (HERD) Survey. We were one of 40 institutions who were selected to test the replacement for the NSF's annual survey of Research and Development Expenditures at University and Colleges. A major enhancement of the HERD format was the expansion of the survey to cover all aspects of research, not just a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Several additional reporting fields including foreign sources of funds, interdisciplinary research centers, numbers of R & D personnel and numbers of proposals submitted and awarded were added this year. Special recognition is made to Pat Zeccolo in the Office of the Vice President for Research and Anne Connolly and others in the Research Foundation Central Office for facilitating the collection of data for the report.

Conference/Journal Support Award Committee by Lance Bosart

Lance Bosart reported the committee's recommendations for conference/journal awards for the spring round of competition. Of the four applicants (three for conference support and one for journal support), one is being recommended for funding contingent upon budget clarifications. The Council voted as follows to accept the committee's recommendation:

Yes – 9; abstention - 1

Excellence in Research by Dale Morse

Dale Morse reported that the Committee will be make recommendations for the Excellence in Research Award to the Vice President for Research. He shared a template which the Committee used for scoring and ranking the nomination packets and requested that members forward feedback or comments to him.

Dale is also seeking clarification and guidance on the Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities process, including possibly constituting a second local committee for review of nominations; opportunity to request nominations from the departments; particularly, previous years recipients of the Excellence in Research Award; and, possible distribution of guidelines and procedures in early fall.

Old Business

Council voted unanimously to accept the Conference/Journal Support Award Committee's recommendation of the wording change to the guidelines to be more specific about conference location. The change is as follows:

Conferences eligible for COR support must be held at UAlbany and/or in the immediate Capital District in order to maximize the visibility of the University to national and international conference participants and to allow as many UAlbany students to attend the conference as possible.

New Business

None

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am

Submitted by Janice E. Bogan