

## **College Research Council Meeting**

**January 27, 2009, 10 a.m.**

**TRP Building II, Suite 150**

**Members Present:** Dr. Russ Lea, Committee Chair and Vice President for Research; Dr. Roy Daigle, Professor, Computer and Information Sciences; Dr. Catherine Dearman, Chair, Maternal Child Nursing; Dr. Phil Feldman, Associate Dean, College of Education; Mr. Ker Ferguson, Director, Technology and Research Park; Ms. Gina Hedberg, Director, Grants Administration; Ms. Dusty Layton, Director, Research Compliance and Assurance; Dr. Laurie Owen, Associate Director, Center for Basic and Translational Sciences; Dr. Deborah Spake, Associate Dean, College of Business; Dr. John Steadman, Dean, College of Engineering; Mr. Reggie Taylor, Associate Director, Technology Transfer; Mr. Ben Tipton, Associate Controller, Grants and Contracts Accounting; Dr. Mary Townsley, Assistant Dean/Director, Faculty Affairs, College of Medicine; Dr. Julio Turrens, Associate Dean, Allied Health; and Dr. S. L. Varghese, Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences.

**Members Absent:** Dr. Maggie Pyle, Director, Sponsored Programs.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Lea at 10:05 a.m. who began by welcoming everyone present to the first meeting of this Committee and thanking them for their participation. Dr. Lea went on to provide a history of the development of this committee and the Research Operations Committee. Based upon past experiences with wide and diverse units, Dr. Lea informed that he had found that it is easier to communicate information through two venues: Operational, and Faculty/Administrator levels. So, USA's Research Operations Committee (ROC) was created, made up of support personnel—administrative assistants, grants administration specialists, financial operations specialists, and others, for the support of faculty, recognizing that these individuals possess a specific body of knowledge. The ROC offers a venue to facilitate the gaining of additional knowledge and certifications to better support faculty. And keeping operational personnel as close to faculty and administrators as possible provides for better faculty support. ROC members are provided professional development opportunities, information on current events, and other relevant materials.

After the establishment of the ROC, this Council was created to include College and University representatives, across lines and units, to communicate opportunities back to faculty. Dr. Lea added that, his past experiences have shown that, without such a council, there is no venue for venting and addressing problems in a collective way, and providing faculty with the information and support they need. The council is able to focus on issues, and collect and provide information across units to the faculty. It is expected that the ROC and CRC will include interactions between the two and work closely together.

Dr. Lea then presented a brief overview of the Technology and Research Park and its purpose, pointing out the patent plaques on the wall of the conference room, and informing that the facility is available to USA faculty for meeting with faculty and partners; and conducting meetings with outside collaborators and colleagues. Dr. Lea continued by requesting that Department Heads dealing with grants and contracts provide a brief overview of their offices to the Council, noting that Dr. Pyle was unavailable today due to illness and would provide information on her office, the Office of Sponsored Programs (Pre-award), at the next meeting.

**Ms. Gina Hedberg, Director, Grants Administration**

Ms. Hedberg provided information on the mission and services offered by the Office of Grants Administration. The Office of Grants Administration (OGA) provides comprehensive non-financial management of awards received by the University of South Alabama in support of research and scholarly activity. OGA is a service-oriented office which functions to assure compliance with applicable federal, state, and private regulations, to facilitate adherence to terms of externally funded contracts and to support the University's faculty and administration by efficiently managing awards.

**Ben Tipton, Associate Controller, Grants and Contracts Accounting**

Mr. Tipton informed the Council that the Grants and Contracts Department is responsible for the post-award accounting activity of sponsored research, and provided a brief overview of the Office. Specific functions of the Office include establishments of accounts, management of direct charges to awards, re-budgeting, effort reporting, and sub-recipient monitoring—ensuring compliance with OMB Circulars A-22 and A-133. Grants and Contracts is also responsible for the timely and accurate submission of interim and final financial reports to sponsoring agencies.

**Ms. Dusty Layton, Director, Research Compliance and Assurance**

Ms. Layton addressed the Council and provided a brief overview of her Office. She stated that her Office acts as a catalyst to advance the research mission of the University, working with University research oversight committees, boards and offices responsible for specific components of research compliance, including the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Biosafety, Institutional Animal Care and Use and Standards in the Conduct of Research Committees to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements related to research activity. The office is responsible for monitoring regulatory changes and recommending institutional responses to ensure compliance, and the oversees development and implementation of policies, procedures, programs and educational activities in compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations governing the conduct of research.

**Mr. Reggie Taylor, Associate Director, Technology Transfer**

Mr. Taylor provided a brief overview of the office of Technology Transfer informing that the Office interacts and works with members of the University of South Alabama community to deliver their discoveries from concept to commerce to benefit the University, the inventors, and the public. The Office manages patent portfolios for the University, and works with patent

attorneys, counsels on agreements, ensuring University ownership of intellectual properties and that inventors share in the proceeds, and consults and advises faculty on clinical trials, patents, trademarks, copyrights.

**Mr. Ker Ferguson, Director, Technology and Research Park**

Mr. Ferguson provided the Council with an overview of the Technology and Research Park, informing that the USA Technology & Research Park, launched in April 2002, and is a major economic development initiative of the University of South Alabama. The RTC is a 503C corporation, and has a positive cash flow of about \$1,000,000 per year. The Park links University resources with the business community in one single location that expands educational opportunities for students, provides new research relationships for faculty and offers fresh growth prospects for businesses. The Park consists of 300,000 square feet and currently is 100% occupied. Participation agreements, which include many of the benefits available to faculty and staff, improve our tenant retention. There are also several small offices available for start-ups where we have an opportunity to grow our own tenants.

Dr. Lea presented the Council with several handouts for the Council's review, the first being a copy of *AAAS R&D Budget and Policy Program* presentation prepared by Kei Koizumi on January 7, 2009, which projects the future climate for R & D, and opportunities by discipline, and a copy of *Science and Technology Policy - 2009*, a presentation prepared by Henry Kelly, a transition team member for President Obama. Dr. Lea added that, as you look at these documents and you review deeper and deeper into the AAAS document, it looks like status quo for all but energy and defense S&T. Dr. Lea advised the Council members to pay particular attention to the trends in federal research by discipline, and added that coming out of a bad economy is the best time to plan, and to position R&D into areas expected to grow. He asked the Council members to take these presentations back and digest them, and then share them with their faculty. Dr. Lea said that he will be happy to come to individual units and work with faculty. Collectively, there is opportunity, and now is the time to plan.

Dr. Lea moved on to the *College Research Roles and Responsibilities* document provided to the Council. It was noted that research administrators on the CRC, operating at the associate dean level, possess a specialized body of knowledge and understanding, and should take time for additional specialized training—setting up for career laddering through certification. This would apply to the ROC as well, obtaining better levels of performance and understanding through professional development, mentoring, and certification.

***Who Generates Competitive R&D Support***

It was noted that 13 faculty members generated 50% of research activities over the past fiscal year. Dr. Lea stated that this total (13) is only 1/3 of what it should be. The challenge is to find 13 more enthusiastic and directed faculty members who want to achieve a higher level of success and performance, and mentor those individuals to help them achieve their goals. It was noted that of our faculty, approximately 400 proposals were submitted, and 13 projects generated 50% of grant activity for FY 2008.

***Green Sheets: Research Activity, Tenure-track New Faculty FY2006 – 2008***

This report was provided to give the Council an overview of the activities of new, tenure-track faculty over the past few fiscal years. Dr. Lea stated that he thought the Council might find this data to be interesting. Total number of proposals submitted, declined, funded, and amounts awarded for new faculty during this three-year period. It was felt that this report might be helpful in identifying junior faculty who may need mentoring or assistance with grant writing, and/or the submission and re-submission processes. Dr. Lea added that Ms. Amy Brown in the Research Office remains available to assist faculty with these processes. It was agreed that more mentoring is needed as well as peer reviews. Dr. Feldman stated that he would be interested to see what senior faculty members are doing. Dr. Steadman added that he would like to have the junior faculty report to also include Co-PI activities. Dr. Dearman indicated that she would like to see a running list, by College, to include all faculty, both tenure track and non-tenure track.

***Sponsored Activity, Cumulative Report, October 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008***

This report was distributed and a brief discussion ensued. Dr. Lea recommended that the Council members take this document back to their units and share the information with their faculty.

***January 6, 2009 Memorandum Regarding Sponsored Activity, October 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008***

Dr. Lea brought attention to the quarterly report transmittal memorandum, noting that from FY 2008 to FY 2009, submissions were down, as well as the number of proposals funded. Dr. Feldman responded that this may be due to the fact that Departmental FTEs are down, and Dr. Owen added that faculty may also be putting off their proposal submissions. Dr. Lea presented the Council with several questions and the discussion continued. Are faculty aware of the support available to them, summer salaries, salary releases, etc? Can faculty become more entrepreneurial? Are faculty aware of the opportunity to directly impact their salaries through grants?

***Establishing Limited Submissions Procedures***

Agenda item held over to next meeting.

***Proposed Spring Retreat of Alabama Universities' Associate Research Deans***

Agenda item held over to next meeting.

Dr. Lea stated that he will look into the possibility of getting some additional faculty productivity reports to the Council. With the time expired, discussion concluded. Dr. Lea reminded the Committee that he remains available to them, and asked that the members submit agenda items for the next meeting. With no further business being before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra S. Corry  
Recorder