



**Faculty Senate**

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November 11, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Office of Research  
HSSRC members  
FRC members  
URC members  
UgRC members  
GSRSC members

**CC:** Research Council

**FROM:** Alan C. Frantz, Ph.D. *ACF*  
Chair, Faculty Senate

**SUBJECT:** Research Council Report #1  
**Internal Grant Subcommittees: Awards and Structure**

On Monday, November 9, 2009 the Faculty Senate considered the Research Council's report regarding its five Internal Grant subcommittees, their structure, and the internal grant award process. After some discussion, the Faculty Senate **voted to approve** the report, with the **additional stipulation that all changes to the submission guidelines and to the review guidelines be clearly identified, and that applicants as well as the internal grant subcommittees be properly notified of those changes.**

It is imperative that all applicants, whether faculty or students, as well as the subcommittee members themselves, know exactly what is expected on the proposals and how the proposals will be evaluated for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The Faculty Senate also noted that the Research Council will continue to work with the Office of Research and the Internal Grant Committees to resolve the issues outlined in the report. The suggestions mentioned in the report were intended to be temporary measures that apply only to internal grant applications for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 while Research Council considers whether to restructure its subcommittees and/or recommend changes to the subcommittees' bylaws.

ACF:crw

**TO: Faculty Senate, Idaho State University**

**RE: Internal grant subcommittees: awards and structure**

RC Meeting Dates: October 8, 2009; October 22, 2009

Research Council Approval: November 6, 2009

Accepted by Faculty Senate: November 9, 2009

Research Council oversees five subcommittees (UgRC, GSRSC, HSSRC, FRC, URC) through which funds from the Office of Research (OR) are made available to faculty and students at ISU. Conflict has arisen over ownership of those funds and which body is designated to make awards. Other concerns include the equitable distribution of such monies among ISU faculty and students, the need to improve access to “seed funding”, the desire to eliminate redundancy among subcommittees, the role of faculty involvement in each subcommittee, and the oversight of subcommittee activities.

AIMS: Advise subcommittees and ISU faculty and students on how they might prepare for the current granting conditions (fall 2009, spring 2010). Clarify the role of Vice President for Research and of faculty subcommittees in the process of making such awards. Avoid conflict over the process of awarding internal grants to faculty and students when funds are made available from the Office of Research.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES: A conflict of directives exists between the Vice President for Research and current subcommittee bylaws. HSSRC and FRC bylaws include wording that states awards are to be made by the subcommittee. The Vice President for Research, however, provides the funds and authorizes awards.

- Faculty concern over who “owns the money” involved and who has the right to distribute it can be resolved by understanding what Facilities and Administrative costs (F&A) are, how they are used on campus, and then working to find a fair and equitable way to distribute funds made available by the Vice President for Research any given year for internal grants.
- The funds derive from F&A monies that are generated by external grant awards. Such funds are usually intended for the university to provide infrastructure that supports research on campus. A percentage of these F&A funds are allocated to the Office of Research, which in turn makes a percentage of its funds available to ISU faculty through internal grant programs. The Vice President for Research is not required to do so yet continues to make these funds available when possible as part of the Office of Research’s mission to foster and grow research at ISU.
- If the two bodies (Subcommittees, Vice President for Research) are not in agreement over a potential award, the Vice President for Research, who disperses the funds, currently has the right to fund or not fund an internal grant.
- Historical implicit and explicit agreements between faculty and Vice Presidents for Research led to an expectation of routine funding of awards recommended by the subcommittees. With new administration and new strategies for research on campus, expectations are changing. These changes must be made transparent to applicants.

- Clarification was needed in Calls for Proposals and was provided by the Vice President for Research. Applicants will now be aware of how the Vice President for Research and the subcommittee members will assess the merit of each proposal.
- Subcommittee members are acting on the understanding of bylaws currently in place. Conflict that results from current subcommittee bylaws cannot be resolved over the long term until the structure and function of subcommittees are reviewed by the Research Council.
- The current model used by the Vice President for Research is that faculty will provide assessment and recommendations for awards and the Vice President for Research will seriously consider those recommendations when making awards. A precedent exists with the Sabbatical Review Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences, which in the past has ranked applications and made recommendations to the Dean who then makes awards that might or might not be consistent with faculty recommendations.
- Alternatively, the faculty could disband its internal grant subcommittees and allow the Office of Research to handle all internal funding opportunities. However, it is the Research Council's opinion that faculty input in the award process is critical for reasons of peer review, equitability and oversight. Faculty opinion is relied upon by the Vice President for Research to help inform award decisions and to gauge the direction that ISU faculty would like to take with the university research endeavor.

#### SUGGESTIONS:

- Document Dissemination: The Council recommends that this document be disseminated to members of each award subcommittee prior to the merit review of fall 2009 applications.
- Reporting: The Council recommends that the Vice President for Research provide a rationale to the subcommittees and applicants when award decisions do not match subcommittee recommendations.
- Representation: Office of Research has ex-officio (non-voting) positions on subcommittees. In the short term, we support the intention of the Vice President for Research to attend subcommittee meetings as the OR representative in order to provide clarification of proposal requirements and to answer questions related to merit assessment.
- Call for Proposals (fall 2009, spring 2010): The Vice President for Research has worked with the chairs of RC, HSSRC and FRC to reach an agreement about how calls for proposals can be modified for the fall semester 2009 and spring semester 2010. This is a temporary agreement until subcommittee structure, function and bylaws can be reviewed by the Research Council.
- Subcommittee Structure: The Research Council will consider the structure and function of each subcommittee and seek to improve efficiency, reduce redundancy, reduce faculty service loads and clarify roles. Recommendations will be made to the Faculty Senate.
- Subcommittee Bylaws: Revision of subcommittee bylaws are needed to fit the Faculty Senate bylaws template of 2008-2009. The Council feels this should be done after subcommittee structure and function has been properly reviewed and approved by the Research Council and Faculty Senate.

Report prepared by Scot Kelchner  
Chair, Research Council of Faculty Senate