

**Research Council of Faculty Senate  
Chair's Report, 2009-2010**

**Prepared by:**

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Chair, Research Council (2009-2010)

**Statement of Recent History and Reorganization of the Research Council and its Subcommittees:**

In spring 2009, the Research Coordinating Council (RCC) of Faculty Senate reorganized to (i) reduce overall faculty service load, (ii) increase faculty oversight of the Council's business, (iii) broaden its representation of academic units, and (iv) make it more responsive to the needs of the Faculty Senate and Administration. Bylaws and mission were rewritten following the Faculty Senate Bylaws Template by Cyndy Kelchner, Deb Easterly, Deanna Dye, and Scot Kelchner as Vice Chair of RCC. The Faculty Senate approved the changes in spring semester 2009.

In the fall semester of 2009 the RCC became the Research Council (RC), with Scot Kelchner as its first Chair. The reorganization of the Council had reduced its membership from 29 (RCC, 2009) to 12 (RC, 2010) while broadening its representation of academic units. The Council now consists of 11 voting members who represent the following academic units on campus: Humanities and Fine Arts; Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Social Sciences; Business; Education; Engineering; Health Professions; Pharmacy; Technology; Research Centers and Institutes; Library and Museum. Vice President for Research is a non-voting member. Faculty Senate Representative (if needed) is a non-voting member.

The much smaller Council body is able to deliberate effectively and in a timely manner those issues brought to the Council by its members or charged to the Council by the Faculty Senate. Additionally, the Council is able to quickly prepare and edit reports, and to invite other faculty and administrators to the Council meetings when additional perspectives are required for deliberations.

The Council then acted on a charge from Faculty Senate to propose a restructuring of its subcommittees (URC, UgRC, FRC, HSSRC, GSRSC) in order to update its system and improve efficiency of the distribution of internal grant funds to ISU faculty and students (see below). The Council responded with a report that reduced the subcommittees number from five to two (URC, HSSRC), with a reduction of 33 required participants while maintaining full representation of academic units.

Hence, in the last 18 months the Research Council has reduced the number of university-level research Councils and subcommittees from six to three, and the number of required representatives from 78 to 28. The reduction of 50 service positions resulted in several positive comments from Faculty Senate members and Administration that the Research Council was now a model for reorganizing faculty committees and for improving committee efficiency at ISU.

Scot Kelchner stepped down as Chair of the Research Council in May, 2010. He remained as un-official Chair through the summer of 2010.

**Council Business, 2009-2010**

Research Council met every two weeks through the academic year of 2009-2010, totaling 13 meetings and two cancellations for the purpose of preparing reports. Catherine Wallace served as scheduler for the first meeting, after which the Chair took over the tasks of preparing meeting agendas, circulating necessary materials for review, and counting votes on actions by the Council. The Chair also regularly attended all meetings of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senate, and Faculty Senate meetings that involved review and voting on Research Council matters (the Council lacked a Faculty Senate Representative).

At its first two meetings, the Council created a priority list of issues to be addressed. This list included both new and long-standing issues from previous years that had not yet been adequately resolved. The issues were combined into four main topics to be handled by the Council throughout the year. All four topics were considered in depth and recommendations forwarded to Faculty Senate by April 2010.

Each initiative or charge involved contact with constituents and pooling of constituent responses. Thus, faculty was canvassed and given the chance to comment on all issues reviewed by the Council. Faculty comments were incorporated into all Council discussions.

The Council prepared three Advisory Reports to the Faculty Senate that described problems and successes with internal funding awards, grant and purchasing oversight by Finance and Administration, and rewarding research at ISU. Each report suggested several solutions to the problems identified in its review. The Council also completed a detailed proposal to restructure ISU's internal grant subcommittees. All reports were approved by Faculty Senate as of May 2010 and all are presently available to ISU faculty on the Research Council website.

#### *Charge by Faculty Senate: FRC Funding Issue of Spring 2009*

The request from Faculty Senate for RC to revise the bylaws for internal grant subcommittees was put on hold until the Council could review and address what those subcommittees should look like. Faculty Senate's request, however, to have the RC resolve a funding issue of FRC grants in the spring of 2009 was dealt with immediately. Research Council deliberated on an impasse of whether faculty or administration had the right to make internal funding awards to ISU faculty given the existing subcommittee infrastructure and bylaws. Both faculty and the Vice President for Research was represented in discussions. The RC reached a workable solution (Advisory Report 1: *Internal grant subcommittees: awards and structure*) which was approved by Faculty Senate on November 6, 2009. The timeliness of the response allowed faculty review of fall-semester internal grant proposals to occur. Awards were made without controversy. The issue did prompt the Council to ask Faculty Senate for a charge to review its internal grant subcommittee structure, with the goal of proposing revisions if needed during the spring semester of 2010.

#### *Research Council Initiative: Advisory Report on Rewarding Research at ISU*

Faculty have long expressed a sense of under-appreciation along with an absence of an adequate reward system for research efforts at ISU. In response to the 2008 RCC report on Research Barriers at ISU, and to issues raised by constituents, the Research Council deliberated issues related to research success and reward for ISU faculty. The Council identified both problems and strengths in the current system. Advisory Report 2: *Rewarding research and scholarship at ISU* was approved by Faculty Senate on February 8, 2010 and includes a summary of the issues as well as a list of suggestions for improvements that are affordable and could rapidly enhance the reward system for researchers on campus.

#### *Research Council Initiative: Finance and Administration Oversight of Research Funds*

According to the RCC's 2008 report on Research Barriers at ISU, poor interactions with the Office of Finance and Administration was the most commonly reported source of research frustration among faculty with grants. The Council determined to review the many issues surrounding ISU administration of, and faculty oversight of, funding awards through the Office of Finance and Administration. Vice President James Fletcher and Controller Roger Egan joined the RC at a December 2009 meeting to present a summary of recent history and new policies of the Office. The questioning session lasted more than 2 hours and brought several issues to light that are summarized in Advisory Report 3: *Research barriers and the Office of Finance and Administration*. The report includes both a summary of past and present issues related to ISU compliance and consistency in its oversight procedures, as well as a list of suggestions for inexpensive improvements to purchasing and grant management obstacles. Faculty Senate approved the report May 3, 2010.

*Request by Faculty Senate: Review of subcommittee structure for internal grants*

In the spring semester of 2010, the Research Council created an ad hoc subcommittee to review and potentially revise the existing subcommittee structure for assessing internal grant proposals. The goal was to determine whether an update in subcommittee structure would better suit faculty needs. Faculty were asked for comments on what their current internal funding needs might be, what parts of the current system worked well for those needs, and what parts did not. The subcommittee was composed of Dr Jessica Winston (Chair), Mr Phil Homan, Dr Leif Tapanila, and Dr Pamela Crowell (VP for Research). By mid semester, a preliminary report was produced that went through two rounds of discussion in Council. Dr Winston then presented the proposal *Research Council Recommendation to Restructure Internal Grants Committees* to Faculty Senate and incorporated suggested revisions that were approved by Council members. The final document was approved by the Faculty Senate on April 16, 2010. Outcomes include a reduction of internal grant subcommittees from five to two (URC,HSSRC), and a reduction in required participants from 49 people to 16.

*Additional comments and accomplishments of Research Council, 2009-2010*

- Worked with Faculty Senate and Vice President for Research to review award decisions by FRC (May-Nov 2009)
- Eleventh-hour action to ensure HSSRC proposal review process in March 2010
- Positive and constructive discussions with Provost, VP Fletcher, and particularly VP Crowell on the nature of research at ISU, the needs of faculty researchers, and the opinions of faculty on major initiatives of the upper administration
- The Research Council served as a bridge between faculty and administration on several controversial issues, often resulting in faculty-approved advances supported by the administration

*Membership of the Research Council of Faculty Senate, 2009-2010*

Dr Subbaram Naidu (Centers/Institutes), Mr Phillip Homan (Secretary, Library/Museum), Dr Jessica Winston (Humanities/Fine Arts), Dr Scot Kelchner (Chair, Natural Sciences & Mathematics), Dr Shannon Lynch (Social Sciences), Dr Mukunthan Santhanakrishnan (Business), Dr Matthew Sanger (Education), Dr Solomon Leung (Engineering), Dr Deana Molinari (resigned, Vice Chair, Health Sciences), Dr James Bigelow (Pharmacy), Ms Carol Mundt (Technology), Dr Pamela Crowell (Office of Research, ex-officio). There was no Faculty Senate representative.

Accepted by Faculty Senate: October 25, 2010