

Idaho State University  
**Research Council**  
**Minutes**

Thursday, September 3, 2009  
3:00 PM  
Faculty Senate Conference Room, REND 301

In Attendance: Bigelow, Homan, Kelchner (Chair), Leung (for Perez), Lynch, Molinari (Vice Chair),  
Mundt, Naidu, Sanger, Santhanakrishnan, Winston  
Non-voting: Crowell, Wallace (Administrative Assistant)  
Guests: Alan Frantz and Phil Cole from Faculty Senate

**1. Preliminaries and Announcements**

Kelchner opened the meeting, declared a quorum and turned the floor over to Alan Frantz.

a. Guest Speaker: Alan Frantz, Faculty Senate Chair

Frantz introduced himself and Phil Cole, the Vice Chair of Faculty Senate. He said at this point the Faculty Senate has no assignments for the Council other than to clarify roles and resolve differences regarding the prioritization of faculty grants. He will meet with Vice President Crowell soon to discuss various issues.

Discussion turned to last year's focus group report concerning the status of and barriers to research on campus. The focus groups' members were from a broad cross-section of researchers from humanities, arts, physical and social sciences, education and health professions. The report mentioned the lack of support from Finance and Administration staff with managing grant funds, purchasing needed equipment, reimbursement for travel expenses, paying grad students and other such expenditures. Although the report was never officially released by the Council, many people had obtained copies of it. Kelchner will distribute the report to Council members for their review.

Bigelow said the Research Coordinating Council initiated the project last year to identify problems preventing ISU from progressing as an institution. Crowell is actively working to resolve some of the issues. The Office of Research will hire an additional staff person, paid through indirect receipts, to process research contracts faster. She plans to form a task force to solve some of the problems. She and her office staff were working to resolve problems on an individual basis with those who have contacted her office directly.

Kelchner said one purpose of the focus groups was to identify questions to put on a campus-wide faculty survey and to provide an overview of faculty perspective for the benefit of the then-incoming Vice President for Research. The survey idea will likely be taken up by this Council in an upcoming meeting. Crowell indicated her support for such a survey.

Frantz and Cole assured the Council that Faculty Senate leadership is actively meeting with faculty, departments, and administration to resolve issues regarding workload allocations. Frantz and Cole then left the meeting.

b. Introduction of members

Kelchner welcomed everyone and had Council members introduce themselves and state the constituencies they represent. He handed out a membership contact list and asked everyone to let him know any needed corrections. Leung said he is filling in for Alba Perez this Fall.

c. Purpose of Research Council and the revised Bylaws

Kelchner informed members that last year the Research Coordinating Council revised its bylaws, changed its name, and completely revamped the Council's purpose and focus. The membership was reduced by about 60% and now includes 11 voting faculty members and two non-voting members. The restructured Research Council will be much more active than it has been in the past. The new focus will be on discussion and deliberation to find potential solutions to problems. Kelchner will work closely with Vice President Crowell to ensure the Council works efficiently on issues it can resolve, and not waste time on things that are beyond its scope or prevented by governmental restrictions. In the first few Council meetings he hopes to identify backlogged issues that the Council can quickly address and resolve before moving on to more time-consuming issues.

Kelchner clarified for the record that the term “**research**” includes everything that is not teaching or service: musical or theatrical performances, book-writing, art exhibits, funded research, anything that helps boost the academic quality and national/international profile of the university. He reminded members that not all researchers bring in funding from outside sources, and research policies should be geared to all researchers, not just high-profile, high-dollar grant recipients.

Kelchner gave a brief overview of the revised bylaws. The Council is formally advisory, and can identify policies that need to be revised or created, but does not actually write policies. There is another Faculty Senate council whose charge is to write policies. This Council helps disseminate information to and collect feedback from faculty.

The Research Council has purview over and oversees its five subcommittees, approving their bylaws, minutes and recommendations. It has the power to restructure, create or disband its subcommittees, with the approval of the Faculty Senate. The current subcommittees are:

- Faculty Research Committee (FRC)
- Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee, (HSSRC)
- Graduate Student Research and Scholarship Committee (GSRSC)
- Undergraduate Research Committee (UgRC)
- University Research Committee (URC)

There will be more discussion in subsequent meetings about these subcommittees and their bylaws, structure and function.

Kelchner emphasized the Council will focus on finding solutions to problems. The Faculty Senate must approve all recommendations and proposed actions by this Council before further action or implementation can take place. He asked members to encourage their faculty constituents to bring research issues to the Council directly so the Council can work with Vice President Crowell to solve them.

Minutes will be taken at each Council meeting as usual. In addition, Kelchner would like to write a report of the discussion, findings and concrete recommendations for each issue the Council addresses, and to forward that report to Faculty Senate for its consideration and further action if necessary.

d. Goals for this academic year

Kelchner asked members to send him potential topics for the Council to address. He will compile a list of those topics for the Council to consider in the next meeting and decide which to work on and accomplish this semester. He wants to find a better way of disseminating the Council's findings and information to faculty at large. He proposed the Council's website as a good venue for posting relevant information. BengalWeb Groups has a similar on-line format to Moodle, and might be a good way of conducting internal Council business between meetings.

Kelchner said for next meeting he planned to allow time for Vice President Crowell to inform the Council of important information about the Office of Research, its funding sources and constraints.

Kelchner asked Council members to review Articles 3.3 and 4.2 of the bylaws regarding the duties and responsibilities of members to attend meetings and participate in Council business, and the structure of meetings. If members cannot attend a meeting, they should notify either him or the

administrative assistant beforehand, and designate a substitute to attend in their stead. Members should also come to meetings prepared to discuss the agenda topic(s) and bring their constituents' concerns for the Council to consider.

Kelchner told members the Research Coordinating Council had been in existence as a Faculty Senate Council since the 1980s, but that it had devolved into governance by the Office of Research, its main purpose becoming a means to disseminate information. He hoped the restructuring will help faculty become actively involved in discussing and resolving research-related issues.

## **2. Report from Office of Research**

Crowell said she is forming a one-time Research Services Task Force with members drawn from faculty, staff, the library, General Counsel's office, and administration to work on solving systemic problems related to research. She plans to include at least one or two members from this Council and the task force will work closely with this Council.

The Office of Research is holding an Open House on Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the Rendezvous Conference Rooms A, B and C. Representatives from Purchasing, Human Resources, the Graduate School, the Library, Sponsored Programs, Grants and Contracts office, the Human Subjects Committee, Biotechnology Committee and others will be on hand to answer questions. The goal is to acquaint the ISU community with the various resources and contacts available on campus to help researchers. She intends to update the websites and provide information online. She welcomes suggestions for improvements.

The directors of all the Research Centers and Institutes will begin meeting on a regular basis to work on common goals and problems. Subbaram Naidu is their representative on this Council and will help coordinate with them.

Crowell plans to hold workshops on such topics as intellectual property, patents, and other topics of interest to researchers. She welcomes suggestions from faculty. She also intends to improve service in processing contracts on a timely basis. A new staff member will be hired to process contracts. The position will be funded through indirect costs.

Lynch suggested more coordination in planning meetings and events would be helpful since too many things have lately overlapped.

## **3. Vote to approve RCC Minutes 190 from April 16, 2009**

**ACTION:** Winston moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Sanger. **Passed** with one abstention.

## **4. Council Chair's Report 2008-09 – Jim Bigelow**

Deb Easterly in the Office of Research prepared a report summarizing the Research Coordinating Council's work from last year. The report will be distributed to Council members for their review and approval next time. Once the Faculty Senate approves it, the report will be posted to websites for public viewing.

Bigelow briefly reviewed the report's highlights and the monies disbursed by the various subcommittees last year. The University Research Committee awards funds for instrumentation; the other committees disburse money for research and scholarship. The various subcommittees' functions, philosophies and other issues will be reviewed by Research Council this year.

Winston informed Council members of two major changes made to the bylaws of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Council last year. The first change was to lower the minimum grant request from \$5,000 to zero to allow for course release requests. The second change was to extend the application deadline from fall to January to allow faculty more opportunities to apply for grants from the various subcommittees. Winston reported that after much discussion the subcommittee opted not to open the eligibility to non-Humanities faculty, though there is some ambiguity regarding Library and Education faculty. Winston will forward the HSSRC bylaws for this Council to consider in the next meeting.

Kelchner reminded the Council members they have the option of remanding the bylaws back to the subcommittee for revision. The Council will review its standing subcommittees this year: their purpose,

structure, and clarify the roles of the subcommittees and the administration. Homan suggested Research Council may wish to review its subcommittees on a regular rotating basis.

## 5. New Business

### a. Reporting mechanism for RC's Standing Subcommittees: (URC, FRC, HSSRC, GSRSC, and UgRC)

Council members suggested various methods its subcommittees could use to regularly report their activities, recommendations and minutes to this Council for review and acceptance. It was decided that all documents and information should be sent to the Faculty Senate office. The Senate office staff will be responsible for distributing information to the Council members, then as needed to Senators, and ultimately to the administration if appropriate. The Senate office will also maintain the Council and subcommittee archives.

There was some discussion how best to facilitate communication between the Council and each of its subcommittees: whether to have a representative from the Council sit on each subcommittee, or a subcommittee chair come to the Council on an as-needed basis, or other options. Kelchner suggested he and Molinari as Chair and Vice Chair of this council attend at least one meeting of each subcommittee to talk about these issues.

Homan suggested clarifying “**approval**” versus “**acceptance**” of minutes, bylaws, and recommendations of the Council and its subcommittees. Kelchner asked Homan to make those changes to the Council’s bylaws and send them to the members for review before the next meeting.

### b. Raising awareness of Research Council reorganization and purpose

Members discussed ways of informing faculty of the changes in the Council’s purpose and function. A flyer to distribute at the Research Open House, posting information on the Council’s webpage, short explanatory emails with links to the webpage were some suggestions. Council members are the representatives for the faculty in their respective divisions, and should remind their constituents of that fact and solicit their concerns. Crowell reminded that not all external funding is research related, but the resources and support services are the same.

### c. Scheduling of issues before the Council

Kelchner asked members to talk with their constituents and submit potential Council business topics to him by next Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. If constituents from multiple divisions complain about the same or similar situations, then he will be aware that the problem is larger and more widespread than if only one division reports the problem. He will consult with Crowell to consolidate and tentatively prioritize the topics in a list for the Council to consider in the next meeting.

## 6. Elect Secretary of RC (ref. Bylaws 4.1.C,E)

Phil Homan volunteered to serve as the Secretary of this Council, with the understanding that minutes would continue to be taken by the administrative assistant.

**ACTION:** Santhanakrishnan moved to elect **Phil Homan as Secretary of the Research Council**. Winston seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

Kelchner asked for suggestions for agenda items for the next meeting. Molinari suggested this Council should soon identify and clarify its relationship with the other research-related committees across campus. Crowell said planning the ISU Research Day would need coordination and brainstorming from all the committees.

Discussion turned to the implementation of the new Workload policy in regards to research and the effect it will have on researchers. The issue fits in with the focus groups’ report on impediments to research. Crowell clarified that the “**average**” meant across a college, not across an individual department. Kelchner said Workload will continue to be a major topic of discussion on campus this semester. He told Council

members that the Faculty Senate leadership was actively working with the upper administration to hash out a compromise that will be mutually acceptable to both faculty and administrative needs. Lynch said department chairs were already working on faculty Workload assignments for next semester. Some members felt this Council should take a position on Workload policy and the impact it will have on research, perhaps sending a short statement from the Council to Faculty Senate supporting a policy conducive to research. Crowell reminded members that the President indicated he was open to considering revisions to the Workload policy if they are forwarded through the proper channels.

**7. Adjournment:** 5:00 p.m.

The next Research Council meeting was scheduled for **Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Wallace  
Administrative Assistant 1  
Faculty Senate Office

Approved by Research Council: September 24, 2009  
Accepted by Faculty Senate: September 28, 2009