

MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

Meeting October 14, 2008

Absent: D. Karnosky, B. Solomon.

New Graduate Faculty Council representative: William Yarroch

New Administrative Initiative:

The Council was provided with a copy of the *Tech Today* announcement of the recent administrative changes implemented as of October 6, 2008. RAC member Anita Quinn is the Director of Human Resources and will no longer be serving on the council. RAC member Julie Seppala has been named the Director of the Sponsored Programs Office and will continue to serve on the council.

Review Final Year End 2008 Research Report to Board of Control – Handouts provided to the Council by Dave Reed.

The Council reviewed the fourth quarter Fiscal Year 2008 Sponsored Programs information consisting of sponsored awards, research expenditures, technology and economic development information. Dave did note the decrease in Federal funding and reminded the council that last year's Federal budget was not approved until 12-26-08 which caused a shift in the timing of Federal awards. It was mentioned that there is a significant variance in Technology and Economic Development Non-Disclosure Agreement figures and the Licensing figure and that perhaps some of their focus could be shifted to increasing the licensing figures.

Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) - Larry Sutter

Michigan Tech has recently become a member of the FDP.

The FDP is “a cooperative initiative among 9 federal agencies and 120 institutional recipients of federal funds for Phase V. The FDP is a program sponsored by the [Government, University, Industry Research Round Table](#) of the [National Academies](#). Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burdens associated with research grants and contracts. The interaction between FDP's 300 or so university and federal representatives takes place in FDP's 3 annual meetings and, more extensively, in the many collaborative working groups and task forces that meet often by conference calls in order to develop specific work products. The FDP is a unique forum for individuals from universities and nonprofits to work collaboratively with federal agency officials to improve the national research enterprise.” (*FDP Website* <http://thefdp.org/>)

Larry is our Faculty representative and can be contacted if there are issues that can be brought to the FDP meetings. He also provided three informational handouts to the council. He found his first meeting to be very beneficial and informative. Currently the partnership is focusing on the issue of effort reporting and is awaiting the results of a National Science Foundation audit of the University of Illinois. By being a member of the FDP we have the option to be involved in pilot projects and also benefit by having access to information such as troublesome contract clause information shared by other institutes via the website. Larry will keep the RAC informed of all new activity.

Graduate Assistant Cost Share (GACS) - Jackie Huntoon

Recently several female faculty members have expressed their concern to Jackie about the GACS program. The tuition support program provided by the Graduate School has been difficult for the new faculty to obtain. They are experiencing delays in setting up proper lab facilities and becoming established which is limiting them in their quest for funding opportunities. It was also noted that there is no system in place to match faculty with graduate students when they are experiencing difficulty in finding students to assist with their research. They questioned as to whether this GACS support could be included as a portion of their start-up package? The council discussed various aspects of the GACS program and concluded that it works very well and perhaps it should be the Departments and Colleges responsibility to resolve this support issue of new faculty. It was also noted that REU's or pre-grad programs are very effective in recruitment of students. Dave Reed suggested to Jackie that if further discussion was necessary, it could be conducted via the RAC mailing list RAC-I.

Effort Reporting-Anita Quinn

The effort reporting committee will be presenting their final report to the Executive Team in the near future. Changes are forecasted to be implemented by the fall of 2009 with the education process being completed by January 2010. The committee's goals are to provide a greater understanding of the reporting process for all employees and to include department representatives in the education process so that each department will have someone knowledgeable about effort reporting requirements and related processes.

Old Business:

At the April 2008 meeting Beth Hoy of the University Transportation Center opened a discussion with the RAC pertaining to collaborative research: "a system to announce intent to submit proposals so better multidisciplinary efforts can be facilitated through the university and lessen the potential internal competition. Instead of Tech submitting 2 or 3 narrowly focused proposals, we could pool our talent into one unified and robust proposal for submission. This could be beneficial for large RFPs which may include Centers of Excellence or other nationally visible initiatives."

The council discussed how such a system could be developed. It was noted that perhaps the department chair should have the responsibility to decide which proposal is submitted for those situations in which there are multi-proposers in one department. Discussion followed about allowing all proposals to be submitted and letting the agency decide, however, it was speculated as to whether the agency would see this as a robust effort or a disorganized effort of the university. The council decided to discuss this topic at the next RAC meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00PM.