

# MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 28, 2005

9:30AM-11:00AM

## Alumni Lounge MUB

X	Dave Reed, Chair, Vice President for Research	X	Pat Martin, Sciences & Arts	X	Larry Sutter, Research Policy Committee (Senate)
X	Cathy Banfield, Vice President for Research Office	X	Terry McNinch, Civil & Environmental Engineering	X	James Wood, Geo & Mining Engineering
X	Don Beck, Physics	X	Soner Onder, Computer Science		
X	Jackie Huntoon, Graduate School	X	Joanne Polzien, Research Compliance		
X	Neil Hutzler, College of Engineering	X	Kurt Pregitzer, Graduate Faculty Council		
X	Shekhar Joshi, Forest Resources & Environmental Science	X	Anita Quinn, Research & Sponsored Programs		
A	Dave Karnosky, Forest Resources & Environmental Science	X	Julie Seppala, Research Accounting		

## MINUTES

**The Committee Approved the September Meeting Minutes.**

### **Jim Wood Presentation:**

Enhancing the Research Environment, New Uses for Overhead.

Currently MTU returns 60% of overhead to the institutes, centers, other research groups, colleges, schools, and departments.

A new program could be developed which would replace part of the nine month university salary and would enable the departments to offer research faculty the option of seven or eight month appointments with one or two months of their salary coming from overhead generated by research. This would benefit the departments in the following ways:

- Reduce teaching obligation to:
  - 1 undergrad course/year
  - 1 graduate course/year
  - 1 seminar/year
- Allow Principle Investigators to use overhead return to participate in the existing MTU “bonus” program

Dave Reed added that the Union would be involved in establishment of any type of “bonus” program. Currently the School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science is the only unit that has this type of program in place. It is called the External Funding Incentive Program (EFIP). We already have a faculty member paying their remaining 20% on grant money, and we would not be able to go below 75% appointments without impacting benefits. A University wide program would need to be implemented.

### Advantages

- Increase number of high caliber researchers at MTU through:
  - Highly competitive starting salaries
  - Reduced teaching loads
  - Bonus plan incentive & ease of implementation
- Compliments university vision to become a nationally recognized research institution.

A discussion resulted in the following points and concerns. Is our current release time program working correctly? NSF does not normally allow release time to be put on grants. Currently each unit can use non-grant monies to reduce a faculty's teaching load. Some use overhead as summer salary. The focus for faculty is teaching, research, and service. This program could add flexibility for incoming faculty, particularly women. In order to do this, we would need to actively maintain a high level of scholarship. Admin Support is would be key, and it would have to be a highly coordinated effort.

Disadvantages:

- PI is at risk with only seven to eight months of guaranteed salary
- Opposition to change within the departments
- Many faculty may not be able to participate

Dave Reed stated another disadvantage for departments would have to come up with the entire amount each fiscal year. Would you really want to hire all incoming faculty under this system? There would be no safety net for those who cannot perform to the level necessary. Teaching load would have to be kept manageable. Standard startup package (nationally) is about \$250K, and most universities do this by utilization of overhead return. State appropriations are partially driven by our research and graduate activities. We have the flexibility now on a case-by-case basis. Education of the chairs would help drive this effort. Incentive would be if you bring in more research dollars, your teaching load would automatically be lightened.

**ACTION:** It was suggested by Dave Reed that Jim Wood coordinate getting a small group together to discuss this issue further. Jim Wood stated that he would send a request to the RAC members via email. Joanne will send the members a link to the External Funding Incentive Program (EFIP).

### **Equipment Use –Julie Seppala**

Julie and Anita have been going to various departments to discuss allowable and unallowable costs. Equipment purchased on one grant can be used on another grant per federal regulations, as long as it does not interfere with the project that originally purchased the equipment. The project that purchased the equipment should always take priority.

### **Encumbering Overhead on Encumbrances –Julie Seppala**

There may be a way to encumber overhead on encumbrances by utilizing our current banner financial system. George Fox is going to be working on this with Banner and SCT, and Julie will keep us updated.

### **Proposal Submission Deadlines- Anita Quinn (submitted by Dave Karnosky)**

Two weeks prior to submission, Research and Sponsored Programs would like to have the proposals submitted to their offices. Anita stated that the budget is the main concern, and the technical submission could still be worked on, but the budget is needed for financial review. Last minute electronic submissions are subject to failure, as the systems sometimes fail or are sluggish at the last minute when everyone is trying to submit. Anita stated that the two-week prior submission is more of a guideline than a deadline.

### **Other Business**

Dave responded to a question about a possible cut in Federal Funding for MTU. He stated that a two to three percent federal cut is possible. The transportation bill has been signed, but money has not been released. Research education and training could see up to a 24% cut. As soon as the university finds out, the VPR office will inform the researchers. Individuals may hear sooner from the various program managers.