Graduate Assistant Cost Share (GACS) Pilot Update-Pushpa Murthy (handout)
The data from the recent GACS pilot was provided and discussed with the council. The GACS pilot provided year-round tuition support, and the amount of tuition provided was determined by the PI's requested direct costs. Statistics of proposals submitted during the same time from 2016 and 2017 (the pilot program) was provided and it reflects a 500% increase in the number of proposals submitted, that requested support. It was noted the National Science Foundation CAREER proposal deadline is in July, thus the data is comparable that month. The data is calculated at an overestimated cost to the university which is the expected risk. Success of the proposals will take another six to 8 months to be determined. The feedback from the pilot was very positive and the faculty support the program change. Evaluation of this program will continue and a larger review committee will be formed to develop some recommendations for permanent revisions to the program by semester end, and implementation by Fall Semester 2018. The council will be updated as the program is reviewed and modified.

Competitive proposal approach for Core Facilities-Lynn Mazzoleni (handout)
While Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) acquisition awards provide valuable new instrumentation, there is little support included for costs such as installation, set-up, technical support, or service contracts to maintain the equipment. After installation, there is a financial support gap of 1-3 years, until a use charge is implemented to generate funds for operation and maintenance. Building a strong, broad user base is difficult, as faculty who are expanding their research are hesitant due to the high costs for utilizing these instruments is too risky and thus, the new equipment is not utilized to its full potential. This dilemma is campus-wide and has been an issue for a very long time. There is a need for development of a program to build the campus user base to support the instrument and support staff. It was proposed to have this program associated with the Core Facility grant program. It was pointed out that the new mid-career opportunity with the Portage Health Foundation (limited to health research) would allow you to apply for these funds if the eligible faculty members are using the instruments. Core facility directors at other institutions face the same problems. This issue will be considered, and a possible revision to the Core Facility program reviewed. Topic tabled by Dave Reed for further consideration and review.

Federal Requirements for Procurement on Sponsored Projects-Joanne Polzien
On July 1, 2018 Federal Requirements will take effect for procurements on sponsored projects. Purchases made using utilized sponsored project funds will require principal investigators to have documented informal quotes for purchases $10K or more. Michigan Tech will require supporting documentation in the form of informal quotes for purchases on externally sponsored projects which are within the $10,000-$49,999 range. Competitive bids will continue to be required for all sponsored project purchases greater than $50,000. Reallocations of expenditures to a sponsored project must be accompanied by the informal quotes documentation obtained at the time of purchase.

Board of Trustee Research Reports-Dave Reed(handout)
The 1st quarter research reports were provided to the Council. It was mentioned that a government shutdown is looming, and nearly two-thirds of our funding is federal, and we always experience a data fluctuation derived by the federal budget process.

Advanced Manufacturing Opportunities-Dave Shonnard
Topic was tabled and will be discussed at the next meeting.
Core Facility Instrument User Time Proposal Process

NSF Major Research Instrumentation grants are designed to purchase an instrument, often only including very minimal costs associated with the installation and set-up of a new instrument. They explicitly do not allow costs associated with research development to be included in the budget. Meanwhile until an instrument is actually acquired and available for use with an established use fee, most PI’s will not budget for the anticipated costs or user time associated with developing new methods in on-going projects/proposals. Thus, a financial gap in support for an instrument may exist for a 1-3 year time frame.

Often, tailored method development is needed for various users with specific and unique demands, which is best facilitated by a research specialist or technical staff member. Thus, a well-supported specialty instrument requires technical staff or a research specialist with advanced training to maintain the instrument, assist and train users, and ensure excellent results. The costs associated with this work often including salary support for technical staff are too big and perhaps too risky for many potential users, especially as they are expanding their research with the new capability provided by the newly acquired instrument.

In summary, there is a clear financial challenge associated with supporting non-departmental, interdisciplinary, specialty instruments especially in the first few years due to the timing of acquisition awards and the high costs associated with research method development necessary for new proposals/publications.

To build the campus user base, we propose a new proposal process specifically associated with Core Facility user time be implemented. We envision supporting proposals that are either directed at developing new methods to expand existing research support or providing proof of concept for publications and proposals. REF Research Seed grants are an ideal model and have been used by some young investigators, but these grants are limited to faculty within their first 6 years of employment.