Georgia State University  
Senate Research Committee Meeting  
January 26, 2004  
Minutes  

Present:            Don Reitzes (Chair), Albertha Barrett, Tim Bartness, Al Baumstark, Roberta Byrum, Gayle Christian, Chuck Derby, Kirk Elifson, Crawford Elliott, Amy Lederberg, Charles Louis, Steve Manson, Art Murphy, Bala Ramesh, Susan Talbert, Laurie Tis, William Waugh

Dr. Reitzes called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm.

Report from VP for Research

Dr. Louis provided an overview of budget issues being faced by his department. He explained the Provost requires all administrative units to voluntarily reduce their budget by 5%, or justify 10% of their budget and put it at risk for funding cuts. Dr. Louis noted he has authority over two areas, the Office of Research and the Internal Grants Program, so a 10% reduction, representing approximately $350K, would have to come from one or both of these areas. Dr. Louis stated he offered three scenarios to the Provost for justifying 10% of his department’s budget, as follows:

- If the entire $350K is taken from the Office of Research, this would represent a loss of 6 to 7 staff positions, resulting in ability to handle only about half of the grants the office currently administers each year.
- If the entire $350K is taken from the Internal Grants program, this would limit the growth in faculty research, which the University has indicated is an important goal of its overall strategic plan. It would have the greatest negative impact on junior faculty researchers.
- If the $350K reduction is split between the Office of Research and the Internal Grants program, it would result in the ability to administer only about 75% of the grants the Office of Research now handles, plus would have a negative impact on the growth in new research by faculty funded through the Internal Grants program.

Dr. Louis stated the Office of Research has received the smallest increase in funding of any unit within the University for the last 5 years. He noted the last time a new staff position was added in his department was during FY96.

Thus, Dr. Louis has requested the Provost provide additional funding for his department, not cut its budget. The most critical needs are for additional money to purchase new computer software/hardware which will enable his department to offer electronic grant submission to faculty, and funds to hire new staff for the Compliance Office. His request was submitted to the Provost in early January. The Provost has indicated he is supportive, and does not plan to cut funding for the Office of Research. However, Dr. Louis requests the Committee draft a resolution in support of protecting the Office of Research and Internal Grants program budgets from being cut in FY05.

The Committee discussed Dr. Louis’ request and strongly supports the notion that the Office of Research is underfunded and cannot afford to have its budget cut. Dr. Reitzes stated the Committee has, each year for the past five years, passed a resolution noting this and communicated its support for increased funding for the Office of Research to the University Senate as well as the Provost. The Committee vowed to commit its support again for the FY05 budget cycle. A vote on the principal of sending a memo to the FACP committee, which is chaired by the Provost, in support of the Office of Research passed unanimously.
Dr. Reitzes will draft a memo to the FACP committee requesting additional funding for the Office of Research. Committee members will vote on the language of the memo by e-mail. Dr. Lederberg proposed the following language be used for the resolution:

The Senate Research Committee believes strongly that the University’s Office of Research is at present underfunded. This unit cannot have its budget cut and maintain essential services needed by the University research community. In addition, the Internal Grants program plays a vital role providing critically needed research opportunities for University faculty and should not be subjected to budget reductions.

Dr. Louis next provided feedback to the Committee about a problem with providing raises to faculty research staff on federal grants. During the last meeting, this issue was raised and it was questioned whether the University of Georgia was able to figure out a way to give raises to its staff on federal awards. Dr. Louis stated he had contacted his counterpart at UGA, Dr. Gordon Patel, and learned they are not providing such raises. He stated it is not allowed by federal OMB Circular A-21, which governs financial management of federal awards.

Dr. Louis noted there has been a dramatic decrease in applications to graduate programs from Southeast Asian students due to their increased difficulty in obtaining visas for the United States. This could negatively impact the number of students enrolled in graduate programs at GSU.

Dr. Louis next handed out a draft of a new policy for Facilities & Administrative Costs on Fellowships/Scholarships. The new policy states that Principal Investigators will not be required to obtain waivers from the Office of Sponsored Programs if a fellowship or scholarship grant provides no F&A with its award. It also states that when F&A reimbursements are available on a grant, they must be requested in the application by faculty. He asked the Committee to approve the draft for adoption at GSU. Dr. Reitzes requested a vote on the new policy; it was unanimously approved by those Committee members present.

Dr. Louis then handed out a draft of a new policy regarding F&A Costs on Sponsored Awards of less than $5,000. The policy states if the amount of the award is less than $5,000 per annum, and the agency does not indicate it will provide F&A costs, Principal Investigators are not required to obtain a waiver of F&A costs from the Office of Sponsored Programs. For those agencies that do provide F&A costs, these will continue to be required. He asked the Committee to approve the draft for adoption at GSU. Dr. Reitzes requested a vote on the new policy; it was unanimously approved by those Committee members present.

Dr. Reitzes asked about the status of indirect cost distributions to the colleges/departments from the Office of Sponsored Programs. He stated that departments have not received their portion of distributions since September, 2003. Ms. Barrett responded that the Office of Sponsored Programs and the University Office of Budget and Planning have been working to get the funds distributed. She expects each department to receive their money by the end of January. Ms. Barrett stated the amount to be distributed will be equal to the total annual indirect cost amount for each department earned in the prior fiscal year. In the future, this amount will be distributed at the beginning of each fiscal year, but it was delayed this year because of administrative problems.

Dr. Baumstark expressed concern about receiving indirect cost funds in the amount earned in the prior year rather than the amount earned in the current year. He stated his department experienced growth in the indirect cost award in the current year, and has adjusted the budget accordingly. He noted there will be a budget shortfall if his department does not receive indirect cost funds equal to the amount earned this year. Ms Barrett responded that departments can work with their college administrative officer to amend their budgets.
in light of anticipated growth in indirect cost earnings. Dr. Baumstark stated this would not help in his situation; he does not have the ability to make any more adjustments to his budget this year. Ms. Barrett said she is open to suggestions on how to structure the distribution of indirect cost funds so that it is more efficient. Ms. Byrum offered to discuss Dr. Baumstark’s concern with the Office of Budget & Planning.

Dr. Louis then provided the Committee a handout on Increasing Recovery of Real Costs on State Grants and Contracts. He noted state agencies which fund grants provide a wide range of F&A rates to GSU, from 0% up to 45.5%, which is the negotiated rate for the University. He stated different research universities in Georgia receive different rates; e.g., Georgia Tech always gets their full F&A cost reimbursed. Vice Presidents at the other universities are asking that all institutions agree to request a minimum F&A rate of 10% on state sponsored contracts. Where they would not provide this, then per the new policy at UGA, this will be added as a direct charge on the grant or contract as a management charge which will be treated internally at GSU as a F&A cost. Dr. Louis asked the Committee to approve a policy which would require faculty to comply with this new policy. Dr. Reitzes requested a vote on the new policy; it was unanimously approved by those Committee members present.

**Responsible Conduct of Research Policy**

Dr. Baumstark provided a handout to members detailing the new policy developed by the subcommittee he chairs regarding Responsible Conduct of Research at GSU. He stated the policy document is in two parts: (1) a two page statement of general principals and (2) a one page list of subcommittee recommendations to be considered by the Committee. Dr. Reitzes asked the Committee to approve the general principals section, then to discuss the subcommittee’s recommendations. Dr. Derby asked if the document should address “General Principals for Academic Integrity…..” instead of “…..Scientific Integrity…..”. There was discussion on this point, and it was decided that “Scientific” should be replaced with “Scholarly” where applicable throughout the document. Dr. Bartness asked that the last sentence on page one “humane care of animals…..” be changed to “humane care of non-human animals…..”. Dr. Baumstark agreed to make these modifications to the general principals section of the document. Dr. Reitzes asked for a vote on acceptance of the general principals section of the document with these modifications. A majority of members present voted in favor of acceptance of the general principals as modified; there was one dissenting vote.

Dr. Baumstark then presented his subcommittee’s six major recommendations on Responsible Conduct of Research. With regard to recommendation number three, Educational Programs, Dr. Baumstark suggested that all departments develop a course covering the topic of Responsible Conduct of Research, and research faculty and students be required to take this course. In addition, research faculty should be encouraged to attend training sessions offered by the Office of Research. He also suggested utilizing existing symposia that are already scheduled to offer training to participants on Responsible Conduct of Research. A recommendation made by Dr. Lederberg is to designate a senior faculty member in each department to act as the in house expert on research issues for others in their department.

Dr. Reitzes brought up the issue of the future of the Responsible Conduct of Research subcommittee, given that it has completed its mission of developing recommendations for the Committee. Dr. Baumstark remarked it would probably be dissolved once its recommendations are accepted by the Committee. Dr. Bartness stated the federal government will continue to require training on issues like Responsible Conduct of Research. Dr. Christian noted that keeping the subcommittee in place will illustrate to the government how serious and committed GSU is to training our faculty and students on this issue. Dr. Reitzes then asked the Committee to vote on acceptance of the Responsible Conduct of Research subcommittee’s recommendations, and on keeping the subcommittee in place until the end of this Senate year. Approval was unanimous by those Committee members present.
Standing Subcommittee Reports

Internal Grants (Dr. Louis)

Dr. Louis stated he had presented a resolution to the Internal Grants subcommittee. For the FY05 Research Initiation Grants program, he submitted there will be a new eligible budget item offering full time tenure track faculty summer salary support equal to 10% of their nine months salary, with a maximum amount of $7,500. This would help to relieve the teaching burden for faculty in the summer and allow them to pursue research opportunities. Dr. Manson asked if there is anything which would preclude teaching in the summer and still being eligible for this program. Dr. Louis responded there is not. Dr. Reitzes requested a vote on approving this new grant program; it was unanimously approved by those Committee members present.

Dr. Louis then reported on statistics he has gathered on the outcomes of Faculty Mentoring Grants. Over the past six years, out of 20 faculty receiving these grants, only two have actually ended up receiving follow on grants for more than $50K. Therefore, Dr. Louis is requesting that the money supporting Faculty Mentoring Grants be rolled into the Research Initiation Grant fund to help support the summer grant program just approved by the Committee. There was discussion by members on this issue. Some members were not in favor of eliminating the Mentoring program. Others thought part of the problem causing lack of success for the Mentoring program is related to faculty chosen to be mentors. Dr. Louis stated the Internal Grants subcommittee is still discussing this issue and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Strategic Planning (Dr. Derby)

Dr. Derby gave an update on the last meeting of the Strategic Planning subcommittee.

Next Meeting

Dr. Reitzes stated the next meeting will be held on Monday, February 16, 2004 at 3:00pm in Room 718 of the General Classroom building.

Dr. Charlene Hurt, University Librarian, has been invited to speak about electronic publication strategies. Also, the Research Infrastructure subcommittee will present its draft of a policy on openness in research.

He then adjourned the meeting at 5:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Brennaman