Georgia State University  
Senate Research Committee Meeting  
February 16, 2004  
Minutes

Present:            Don Reitzes (Chair), Paul Alberto, Jeff Ashby, Al Baumstark, Roberta Byrum, Gayle Christian, Chuck Derby, Kirk Elifson, Crawford Elliott, Sandra Garber, Kerry Heyward, Amy Lederberg, Charles Louis, Steve Manson, Art Murphy, William Waugh

Dr. Reitzes called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The first order of business was review and approval of the minutes from the previous two meetings, which were held on December 15, 2003 and January 26, 2004. No member present at the meeting asked that changes be made to these minutes. Dr. Reitzes made a motion for approval of the minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by those members present.

University Library Alternative Publication Strategy

Dr. Charlene Hurt, University Librarian, was invited to speak about an alternative publication strategy she is considering for journals maintained at the GSU library. She provided some background on the rising costs the library has experienced in maintaining subscriptions to scholarly research journals. She explained the publishing business has been monopolized by a few large publishing houses, in particular Elsevier, and subscription fees keep increasing each year. She stated some journals have become so expensive that the University can only afford to purchase them in electronic format, which brings up the issue of how to preserve the content for future reference. She noted Massachusetts Institute of Technology has recently terminated its contract with Elsevier because of escalating prices, and other universities are beginning to follow MIT’s lead.

Dr. Hurt asked that faculty who publish in scholarly journals request their publishers put pressure on Elsevier to lower prices. Dr. Manson asked if the reason for Elsevier’s price increases could be due to the recent devaluation of the U. S. dollar. Dr. Hurt responded devaluation could be a factor, but it does not account for all of the increases. She noted one strategy used by publishers to increase revenue is to require libraries to purchase the print edition of journals in order to get the electronic edition. Thus, while the advent of electronic publishing should have reduced prices for journal subscriptions, it has instead resulted in additional costs to libraries. She also stated contracts from some publishers for electronic versions of journals are effectively rental agreements, they do not grant ownership of any content to the library.

Dr. Manson asked about the legality of printing out copies of articles from Elsevier’s electronic journal databases and providing copies to others. Dr. Hurt responded that it is legal for each faculty member to print one copy of an article for personal use, but it is illegal for the library or anyone else to print a copy for circulation purposes. Dr. Alberto noted this activity is not only illegal, but part of the reason why publisher’s prices are so high. He expressed concern about the viability of scholarly journals in light of efforts by libraries to utilize other means for publishing research articles.

Dr. Hurt stated faculty have access to several very expensive journals at no cost to GSU because Elsevier offered deals to UGA, Georgia Tech and Emory which allowed our faculty to have access for free. However, to maintain access to these journals, GSU cannot cancel any journal subscriptions with Elsevier. In addition,
if any person at GSU breaks the copyright agreement with Elsevier, then our access to electronic versions of these journals will be shut down.

Dr. Hurt provided a handout from the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Research Coalition (SPARC), a collaborative organization comprised of academic and research libraries across the US and Europe. This organization is encouraging faculty to move toward publishing their research in open access journals, which utilizes a business model that does not require users to pay for access. Dr. Hurt indicated that SPARC and other open access journals offer a reasonable alternative to publishing in traditional peer review journals, and suggested that GSU faculty begin using this as a forum for publishing their research.

Dr. Hurt asked GSU researchers to consider Biomed Central (www.biomedcentral.com) as an alternative to publishing in traditional scholarly journals. GSU recently joined this organization, which publishes original research articles covering topics in biology, medicine, and the life sciences. They operate open access journals which are free of charge. They charge a minimal rate per page to publish articles. Any GSU faculty member is entitled to publish here. She also mentioned another open access journal which GSU is a member of, the Social Science Research Network (www.ssrn.com). She noted Biomed Central is refereed, but SSRN is not. The type of review offered by Biomed Central is not as comprehensive as that provided by the traditional peer review journals. She also asked faculty to check out another open access journal, the Public Library of Science (www.plos.org), which is backed by a number of very distinguished scientists.

Dr. Hurt stated her goal is to reduce the number of journals to which GSU subscribes for both the paper and electronic versions. Dr. Baumstark asked if it would be possible to consolidate the number of duplicate subscriptions for GSU, Emory, Georgia Tech and Medical College of Georgia. She responded this has been a goal in the past, but has been difficult to accomplish. She is going to be making decisions about taking electronic only versions of journals, and will be consulting with the University Senate and other faculty in arriving at decisions about which journals will be maintained in electronic version only. Dr. Baumstark noted the importance of keeping back issues of journals, and asked if the contracts for electronic versions would allow this. Dr. Hurt stated only those electronic journals which provide perpetual rights to the content by the library will be considered. She stated detailed criteria which will be used to help make the decision about which journals will be chosen is available for review on the University Library website at www.library.gsu.edu/research/pages.asp?ldID=57&guideID=0&ID=685.

The library is also looking to cut costs by purchasing books in paperback form rather than in hardcover form. According to research Dr. Hurt has reviewed, paperbacks hold up almost as well as hardbacks and the cost to rebind is much less than the difference in price between the two.

Dr. Hurt stated she asked to speak to the Committee because she wants faculty to be aware of the tremendous cost increases experienced by libraries and the negative impact this is having on the quantity of research information available. She believes there will eventually be only two types of universities, those that can afford to keep journals in their libraries, and those that cannot. She again asked faculty to speak to their journal editors about working with publishers to keep prices down.

Dr. Hurt recommended researchers retain their copyright on anything published in scholarly journals. Doing this allows the author to provide copies of articles to their students free of charge. When the journal retains ownership of the copyright, the library could be required to pay the publisher a fee to put a faculty member’s article on reserve for students. However, when use of the article is restricted only to those students in the faculty member’s class, then it is considered to be fair use, according to the laws of the state of Georgia. Faculty members must take any of their articles off reserve at the end of the semester; it is a violation of copyright law to keep articles on reserve over consecutive semesters.
Old Business

Dr. Reitzes noted the Committee previously passed a resolution in support of the Office of Research budget request for FY05. He stated the Review Committee has been appointed by FACP, and all three members on the Review Committee are also members of the Senate Research Committee. The three members are Dr. Amy Lederberg, Dr. Robin Morris and Dr. P. C. Tai. Dr. Reitzes appointed Dr. Lederberg to be the Senate Research Committee’s contact person on the Review Committee. She gave an update on their activities. She stated there are no clear guidelines on how to conduct the review. The group met with Ms. Albertha Barrett and they are working on generating a report and recommendations for the Provost.

The Committee previously passed a resolution adopting a new policy on Responsible Conduct of Research. Dr. Baumstark has made revisions to this policy as requested during the January 26 meeting. Dr. Elliott moved that the policy as revised be approved by the Committee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Manson and unanimously approved by those members present.

Standing Subcommittee Reports

Research Center Review (Dr. Reitzes)
This committee has not met, but Dr. Reitzes reported the group has learned it will have to do a review of the Center for Risk Management and Insurance Research. Dr. Benardot and Dr. Emmanuel have been appointed to serve as the subcommittee members for this review.

Internal Grants (Dr. Reitzes)
Speaking on behalf of Dr. Romski, Dr. Reitzes reported the committee met in February and discussed the possibility of merging some of the grant programs. Also, the group is scheduled to meet with the Internal Grants Peer Review Committee to discuss their process and how it can possibly be improved.

Research Infrastructure (Ms. Byrum)
Ms. Byrum provided a copy of the Openness in Research Policy which the group had drafted. She went over the most important points contained in this new policy. In section E, there was a change recommended by Dr. Baumstark. After discussion, it was decided the second sentence in section E should be modified to the following “In such cases, written approval of exceptions to this policy can be made by the appropriate department chair, College/School Dean, and the Vice President for Research.” Dr. Lederberg made a motion to approve the Openness in Research Policy with the above stated revision. The motion was seconded by Dr. Reitzes, and unanimously approved by those members present.

University Computing (Dr. Manson)
Dr. Manson reported the group put together a proposal to the NSF for a $500K machine for the University. He thanked the IS&T department for their help in getting the data for the proposal and Dr. Louis for committing $150K in funds as well.

Next Meeting

Dr. Reitzes stated the next meeting will be held on Monday, March 15, 2004 at 3:00pm in Room 718 of the General Classroom building.

He then adjourned the meeting at 3:55pm.
Respectfully submitted,
Gary Brennaman