

Research Council Annual Report 2000-2001

DATE: June 26, 2001
TO: Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Jim Coakley, Research Council Chair
SUBJECT: Research Council Annual Report - Academic Year 2000-2001

The purpose of the Research Council is to promote, stimulate, and facilitate research activity at Oregon State University. The Council does this by advising the Vice Provost for Research concerning the dissemination of information, by providing advice on research policies, by reviewing and ranking requests for funds from various OSU funds, and by reviewing pre-proposals as required for external research funding opportunities to which the university can submit only a limited number of proposals.

During the period covered by this report, the Research Council met eight times and reviewed 121 requests for support from OSU funds. Of these requests, 41 were approved for funding at a total of \$451,945. The source of funds and amounts provided were as follows:

1. General Research Fund (GRF): 14 awards totaling \$105,516.
2. Research Equipment Reserves Fund (RERF): 26 awards totaling \$321,429.
3. Directed Research Fund - Major Research Initiative (MRI): 1 award totaling \$25,000.

The Council reviewed 8 requests for support from the Kelley Family Fund: Equipment Grants for Materials Science, administered by the OSU Foundation. Of these requests, 4 were approved for funding at a total of \$93,575.

The Council reviewed and made recommendations to the Research Office on two external solicitations to which OSU could submit only a limited number of proposals.

1. Packard Foundation - Interdisciplinary Science Program: 6 pre-proposals reviewed; 1 selected.
2. NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program: 7 pre-proposals reviewed; 3 selected.

On November 17, 2000, the Research Council revised its standing rules to prescribe procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest. In the event that a Council member is a principal investigator or co-investigator of a proposal to be reviewed by the Council, the chair shall replace the Council member with an alternate and the alternate will then participate in the review of all the proposals being considered for the particular funding opportunity. Alternate members will be selected by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and serve a term of one year. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee approved the changes to the standing rules on April 5, 2001.

Prompted by a meeting of the Vice Provost for Research's Advisory Board on 30 May, Council members generated a list of faculty concerns about research and the role of the Research Office. These concerns were forwarded to the Research Office. The Council members recommended that the Research Office and the Vice Provost for Research undertake the following:

1. Continue the 1-day signature/approval turnaround for budgets and proposals being prepared for submission.
2. Establish a system that will address the problem of balloon payment of vacation pay for soft money employees at the end of their term. Vacation should accumulate, as for other OSU employees, in an account that the individual can move from position to position within OSU and from which an individual can draw upon leaving OSU.
3. Establish a university-level fund to help P.I.s bridge personnel and critical operating expenses for relatively short periods between grants.

4. Routinely support some of the costs of producing large proposals prepared by investigators in several departments/colleges. Production costs on some large proposals: copying, photography, etc., depending on the subject, can become sizable, ~ \$1,000, and multi-department/college involvement leads to unproductive confusion with regard to who pays for what. Clearly, mechanisms for making these funds available need to be streamlined. Requests must be met in short-order.
5. Increase opportunities for release time to do research and prepare proposals. Currently, the release time program is viewed as being largely restricted to young faculty. GRF does not currently support release time.
6. Establish a management (not accounting) information system for P.I.s that enables accountability and future spending projections on research grants. The lack of an accurate and timely financial management system continues to be a major inefficiency, especially with regard to faculty time. The disconnect between FIS and HRIS seriously challenges timely management of grants, contracts, and other research funds that are salary-intensive. Helpful and informative reports are often not available, or the information is several months out of date.
7. Secure graduate fellowships. Graduate students are crucial to the research endeavor at OSU.
8. Improve University-level infrastructure for research at OSU. Current facilities are in dismal shape. Specific examples noted by faculty are marginal campus computing, networking, and IT support, and the number and scope of common-use facilities supported by OSU, rather than by P.I.s on their grants.
9. Serve as the "voice" for research within the administration. The University has not put research as a priority for the future, even though research is crucial to the success of the institution, especially with achieving top tier status. As thrusts are being mounted to improve athletics, increase undergraduate enrollment and retention, open the Bend Campus, etc., comparable thrusts should be mounted to increase graduate enrollment, and improve facilities, services, and infrastructure for research.
10. Engage in fund raising, possibly through the OSU Foundation, aimed at building the research infrastructure on campus.

Research Council members and year of termination are as follows:

Jim Coakley, Chair '02
Rubin Landau '01
Kathleen Moore '01
David Myrold '01
Valerian Dolja '02
Goran Jovanovic '02
Thomas McLain '03
Machteld Mok '03
Patricia Wheeler '03

Ex-Officio: Rich Holdren

Research Council *alternate* members and year of termination are as follows:

Lynda Ciuffetti '01
Murty Kanury '01
Chris Mathews '01
Brent Steel '01
Jim White '01

The Council Members are grateful for the superb support provided by the Research Office staff: Dawn Marie Gaid, Rich Holdren, and the recently appointed faculty liaison, Jack Higginbotham.