

## University Enrichment Committee Minutes

DATE: October 26, 2009

TIME: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

PLACE: TRIMBLE HALL

In attendance:

Peter Greenfield  
Brendan Lanctot  
Jennifer Utrata  
Renee Houston  
Leslie Saucedo  
Jim Evans  
Tamiko Nimura  
Cathy Hale  
Sarah Moore  
Jim Jasinski  
Heidi Orloff

Chair Renee Houston opened the meeting by asking for feedback regarding two recent changes made by the UEC involving 1) faculty travel and 2) IRB approval. For faculty travel, new requirements include a travel waiver form for research or conference participation outside of the United States and a special travel waiver form for research or conference participation to countries with a travel warning. For faculty research applications with IRB involvement, research exempt from IRB review needs to provide a statement of exempt approval status from the departmental IRB designate, and research requiring expedited or full board review should include a copy of all completed and approved IRB materials.

Sarah Moore summarized some of the feedback she has received thus far. For some faculty, doing the IRB work so far in advance is very difficult. George Tomlin found it hard due the dates of various deadlines in O.T. But Sarah thought we can still make this work since some of these conflicting deadlines were only a problem this year and the deadlines won't cross in future years. Heidi wondered if materials could be submitted to UEC and IRB concurrently. Sarah did not think that we could make awards contingent on approval because of the difficulty associated with tracking these processes. There was a general discussion about flexibility and a concern that some might think we're sending the wrong message on faculty research.

Although the IRB requirements are tricky for sabbaticals, in particular, Sarah noted, we could put language in that says "if this is a hardship, let the UEC know" or "we're willing to talk." The issue is that the university cannot

support faculty research requiring IRB approval if, in fact, the approval is never obtained. This puts the university at risk. Once the sabbatical is granted, it becomes too difficult, in practice, to ensure that faculty comply with IRB application guidelines. On the other hand, sabbaticals are granted between 12 and 18 months before the leave occurs. IRB approval expires at the end of a year after which time an extension must be sought. This strikes the committee as unfortunate bureaucracy for the faculty member. Moreover, faculty often do not have the time to launch all preparatory methodological steps so far in advance of when they might actually engage in the work. Heidi wondered if exceptions might be made then for sabbaticals only. But after more discussion it was decided that for now Cathy and Renee would draft a sentence saying something along the lines of "if these requirements present a hardship for faculty, then let us know."

In terms of travel changes, the main feedback Sarah heard had to do with faculty upset that students can never go to countries with a travel warning, in the specific instance of when they are going to help faculty with research in a particular country with a travel warning. The reasoning is that often faculty feel like they know the safety of a country better than others and should be allowed to use their judgment in terms of a student accompanying them or not. Jim E. asked if this was a hypothetical, but Sarah said no. Cathy reflected on the power differential between professors and students and how policies should be sensitive to this, and Heidi commented on the underlying responsibility Puget Sound has to students when we allow them to travel to countries with travel warnings.

Sarah explained that this is a real case, and faculty are concerned because travel warnings are often given to low-risk countries just for political reasons. The faculty member who had concern with the current policy argued that he or she will be evaluated in terms of doing research with students and now cannot bring students along, complicating research plans. Can exceptions be made? A general discussion began, although all admitted that it would be hard for anyone to make such decisions in this room without the appropriate, deep country knowledge. Jim E. talked about attorneys and the legal implications and Sarah said the faculty members taking issue with the policy had stated that they had found examples of other university policies that appear to provide good alternatives. Brendan thought Cuba was a great example of a place where students would want to go, and where the travel warnings are obviously very political in nature. Sarah wasn't sure how other universities deal with the issue, but Tamiko expressed concerns about breaking precedent here, and Jennifer wondered about the other ways to involve students in research here or to utilize local researchers or students in a particular country. Cathy noted that studying abroad in a country should be the first step for doing research there, but students cannot study abroad

now in countries with a travel warning! We have to consider the larger policies at Puget Sound. Heidi discussed legal obligations and the fact that the U.S. Peace Corps has escape plans for each volunteer whereas Puget Sound does not have the resources for this.

Sarah noted that Lisa Ferrari is working on addressing this issue with concerned faculty members with vested interests and thinking about whether it is possible to make an exception or not. Jim E. said that the legal aspects seem worth looking into, though Sarah thought that this was being addressed as well by Ferrari.

Next Renee reviewed the faculty senate charges. We now have one spring deadline for all student research, which appears to be no problem since there were few fall applications for the first spring deadline anyway.

A discussion ensued about the laptop loan program previously administered by the UEC. There is no money to replace the 3 UEC old laptops and although they are not borrowed often, some reflected on the fact that some faculty do need them occasionally. Renee asked about students needing them, but Sarah clarified that only faculty who had been granted research grants were supposed to use them.

Most people argued that it would be nice if the UEC got out of this business since notebooks are available elsewhere. Jim J. mentioned that department chairs should request laptops in their equipment requests, especially since laptops become obsolete so fast.

Renee mentioned the 3<sup>rd</sup> charge of revising professional development awards, but instead a heated discussion ensued regarding the next order of business, the category caps for the UEC travel awards. The max for faculty conference travel is \$1350 and the issue of a lump sum payment came up. Sarah clarified that the issue is that our mean reimbursement amount is around \$1100; presently UEC does not have the means to afford a change in caps that would cause the mean reimbursement to increase. Cathy said that the departmental discretionary travel funds are helpful in filling gaps but many others discussed the fact that conferences are in different cities, per diem amounts are very small, and some conferences have very high fees. Jennifer also mentioned that there is little incentive for faculty to choose lower-cost airfare when full airfare is reimbursed whereas faculty saving on airfare end up paying out of pocket in terms of conference fees and per diem costs. Heidi objected to caps coming down, while Jim J. and others talked about how unrealistic the allocation is right now. Sarah expressed the idea that there is a systematic "bias"; with the way category caps are set presently, those with greater airfare, lower conference fees and lower lodging expenses are reimbursed at a greater rate than those with low

airfare but high conference and hotel costs. Thus, although the overall cap of \$1350 would perhaps not change and the mean reimbursement rate would need to stay at around \$1100 with the current number of faculty who apply each year, UEC might consider revising category caps so that trips with certain types of conference expenses were not systematically reimbursed at a higher or lower rate. Heidi described faculty in some places who are self-funded for conference travel.

Clearly the mean cost of a trip is up, and although there are generally no second trips, Sarah said 2<sup>nd</sup> trip applications can be put aside until May 15. 35% of funds have been already allocated this year, but \$4,000 rolled into this year from last once all reimbursements were finally paid out in July, 2009. Heidi wondered how many applications have per diem and conference registration fees that are at the maximum, suggesting that this would be interesting data. Sarah said that the issue is complicated and we need to devote some time to it this year. After more discussion it was decided that the UEC would look at this issue sometime this year.

Renee brought everyone back to the last two charges. Student research applications will come in on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> and the UEC should read them with an eye toward seeing if the revisions to the student application instructions yield clear and complete proposals. The faculty research deadline is Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>. Sarah reminded everyone about the Register Lecture by Suzanne Holland on Thursday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm.

Heidi, Cathy, and others asked for a bit more notice before an email was sent with the next meeting time. It was decided that our next meeting will be held on a Friday at 3:30pm, just for this semester since schedules will change for next semester. The next meeting will be called by the Chair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Utrata, Secretary for the Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting