

**Research Council Annual Report and Summary**  
**Submitted to**  
**John Nolt, Faculty Senate President**  
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The points listed below are roughly chronological, although since there were/are several processes occurring simultaneously, the narrative for each is outlined in the bulleted points.

- Leadership of the RC included the chair (J. Hall), vice chairs (B. Blass, K Stephenson), and co-participation by members of the office of research (OR)
- In the fall semester the RC took up several issues in dialogue with Greg Reed, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, and Brad Fenwick, Vice Chancellor for Research regarding strategic planning that was ongoing. The concerns were for research space, return of F&A dollars and evaluations of the degree to which IT was functioning for research and scholarship. Email was an ongoing concern, although there was consensus that matters had improved greatly under Jesse Poore's leadership.
- The forums that met in 2008 spring semester were poorly attended by the faculty as a whole, but were productive in that panel members interacted with one another, and were helpful in pointing out areas needing improvement or more faculty support for research, scholarship and creative activity. This included the need for more graduate student involvement with research, which became the focus for planning a new forum this year.
- The Quest flyer was introduced by Brad Fenwick, and discussed. The RC expressed positive feedback about this means of publicizing scholarly achievement among faculty members, in terms of funded proposals and other awards. The Scholar of the Week has drawn particular attention to individuals who have an outstanding program of scholarship, which is culminated in an award. This is a way to honor and draw attention to the many stellar faculty members at UT, and has not been limited to the hard sciences, but includes social and health sciences, business, arts and humanities.
- In the first meeting in the fall of 08, the membership of the RC was discussed. The RC has had a long tradition of inclusiveness. Many who come to RC meetings are not senators, but usually are former senators who have found the RC to be one of the few places in the University structure where faculty can have less formalized and more open discussion of research issues. Former chairs had supported this as did I as the current chair. The email list for the RC is long, and discussion of this issue led to consensus that these non-senate members should be allowed to participate in the council. In terms of voting, the ex officio members, who are associate deans, etc., do not vote; most votes are verbal, and often are made by consensus after discussion. The decision to remain inclusive was supported by the RC.
- As chair, I made an effort to have voice votes after a motion and second to tie up issues that were discussed, after consensus had been reached. Roberts Rules of Order have traditionally not been strictly followed.

- The committee structure of the RC was streamlined by the chair, insofar as is allowed by current bylaws. There must be certain standing committees and panels to take care of distributing funds for faculty research, scholarship and creative activity, to make awards, and do evaluation. Subcommittees panels and task forces for this year included the following (mandatory are \*): Centers Evaluation,\* Policies and Procedures,\* Research Promotion,\* SARIF Equipment,\* SARIF GRA,\* Chancellors Awards Panel,\* EPPE Panel,\* Interdisciplinary Projects, and a Forum Task Force was added.
- Centers Evaluation: This year there have been two new centers applied for and approved, and one was dissolved. Last year clearer evaluative criteria were set by this committee so that currently, within policies of the office of research (OR), centers will set goals and account for the previous year's goals. Funds will be centrally distributed, and centers will now account more clearly for how money is spent. Tse-Wei Wang is commended again for her work in 07-08 which made center criteria more transparent and standardized.
- After dialogue that included input from Abby Mello, and Matthew Fleischer, the GSS reps in the RC, the topic for a well-publicized single forum for the year was decided by the RC to be: graduate student involvement in faculty research. Initial faculty interest in this topic, combined with GSS saw convergence on the topic. The RC membership recommended that we try to engage the GC in planning this forum.
- In the fall semester, Hall, Reed and Stephenson met with Anfara and several other GC members but could not reach a consensus on this idea. The RC went back to the drawing board.
- Abby Mello designed a survey of graduate students in the spring semester to get opinions on their involvement with faculty research. the survey was not designed to be a full polling of the graduate students, but merely to generate ideas for a forum. The survey was administered with only a fair response rate, but demonstrated that overall students were pleased with their participation with faculty in research. A particular finding was that students like involvement with faculty other than their advisors in the research component of their educational experience. The RC consensus was that this might be part of the focus for a forum.
- I communicated to the GC that there had been a survey of graduate students regarding their involvement with faculty research. GC stated they thought this should be discussed at an upcoming meeting, and I was asked to come to report on these survey findings. I was unable to attend the meeting, and said the GSS people who conducted the study would be best prepared to address the GC about it. Abby Mello presented the findings. The GC welcomed the information and stated that the survey should be done with a greater number of subjects. By this time, late in the year, it was decided in the RC that we would go ahead with the forum anyway, but that it would have to wait until the fall.
- Each of the panels completed their work to make just-in-time distribution of EPPE funds for amounts totaling less than \$5000 for costs faculty incurred in scholarship such as publication fees, framing, transporting artwork, etc. SARIF Equipment awards are made similarly

throughout the year, decided by that committee. In the spring, the Chancellors Awards for Creative Achievement and the Promise awards were made, and the review process was electronically conducted. Increasingly these review processes can be made paperless via using email or Bb sites.

- In the course of the year, with input and feedback from the RC, and effort by B. Fenwick and the OR, publications long needed to make faculty, students and the University as a whole aware of achievements have been made. Quest flyers were first created and distributed, and later the Quest magazine was published. Feedback from the RC was that the Quest magazine issue centered around one topic, such as evolution, was very powerful. Artists, scholars and researchers all had contributed their perspectives on the topic. Fenwick has said that Quest will continue to do this whenever possible. RC is in agreement with the OR that this is an important step, making UT more comparable in these research publications to other flagship campuses wherein more than “big science” is emphasized, and scholarship and creativity of other kinds are duly noted.
- VC Fenwick spoke in the same meeting in the early spring, of making also an annual report for trend analysis in research, and a quarterly report which would be more tailored for associate deans for research to account for year-to-date activity, such as proposals submitted, and awards made.
- After two years of discussion in cooperation with the OR, and because of a lack of policy in these areas, Research Data and Research Tangible Property were approved in the RC, although all were not enthusiastic. UT has been without these policies for some time and this is out of compliance with funding agencies and federal authorities. Issues of data preservation, access, ownership, patents for designs and materials, and intellectual property concerns all came to play in these two policies. In 07-08 the policies were sharply questioned at the EC level and thus again did not reach the senate for approval. L Gross had submitted a lengthy set of concerns to the RC, and G Pulsiner had also made suggestions. The RC referred this feedback to G. Reed, AVCR, who essentially was drafting these policies from a compliance perspective, and was amending them this year. They came back to the RC last spring, and were approved. In this year’s versions, some of the faculty feedback was addressed, but concern was raised at the EC level that all faculty still had not had adequate opportunity to review the policies for suggested changes in wording, or substance of the two policies.
- The Research Data Policy, and the Research Tangible Property Policies were posted on the faculty website for about three weeks, and more feedback was elicited. I collected these documents and reviewed them. I then sent them on to Reed, who incorporated most of the concerns by changing the term and concept of “ownership” of data and property to “responsibility and accountability” for them. This is a joint effort by faculty researchers and the university, both of whom are held accountable by outside parties, for the custody, confidentiality, and any further enterprise created by the research activity, and the devising of new technology.
- After incorporating this basic change in substance and terminology, the RC again approved the policies, and they were resubmitted to the EC, where they were approved. They were

then presented to the Senate where they were passed without objection. After the policies have been in effect for perhaps 2 years, they should be reevaluated.

- A task force organized in the late fall met several times with W. Hines to look at models for ledgers. These ledgers are the means by which researchers are able to track their research funds and assess at any point how much money remains in the account. Previously this was not possible; the format was accounting-friendly rather than researcher-friendly. Over the course of 1-2 months the various format options were examined and changes were made accordingly. Hines used this input and a new ledger has now been designed. (I am not certain of its time of implementation.)
- In February, Dr. Linda Phillips, from the Library, came to the RC meeting to discuss the plans the library was making to create an electronic, publicly accessible UT repository. The RC interest was that this would be a repository for faculty papers; and would be an avenue for publishing not only finished works, but working papers, commentaries, preliminary findings and conceptual frameworks. This also led to a discussion of publication rights, and the distress of authors having their copyrights signed away while journals continually raise subscription rates to libraries. This has implications for tenure-leading faculty who need publication outlets with a short turn-around time. Phillips' presentation to the RC was on her part a means to get feedback, and then tailor the presentation to the larger audience to whom she presented at the following senate meeting.
- A major focus in the RC in the spring semester was abruptly begun when the stimulus package was approved by the US Congress. Research and scholarship funding mechanisms had in recent years essentially sharply decreased funding of new projects, leaving highly scored proposals in the pipeline. The stimulus would provide a two-year bolus of dollars for research and scholarship. Some of the ready-to-go highly scored proposals were now eligible to be funded with the stimulus research package. In addition, new mechanisms were created. The OR and the RC became jointly committed to seeing that UT would get its share of awards under the Challenge Grant mechanisms. Briefly, these are two year, \$1,000,000 awards which are designed to attack a significant problem, with milestones tangibly measurable at points within the two year process. B. Fenwick organized an "all-hands-on-deck" approach in March, calling an open faculty invited workshop in order to rapidly get proposals underway. The call for the Challenge Grants was issued in March for some RFAs having an April 27 deadline. More such RFAs are forthcoming in similar funding streams as researchers have traditionally been using, although with shorter turn-around times for completion of projects and dissemination of findings. The down side is that after two years, we may see these funding streams for research decrease to 2007 levels. Therefore a continued, intensified effort is needed over the current two year period to maximize innovative research, especially in the areas of intractable problems, green energy, etc. These grants are designed especially for novice researchers/scholars to form a base for research/scholarship to follow.
- An appointed force of the RC drafted a resolution (Faculty Senate Resolution in Response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA]). In the EC this was not totally well received; the argument was that it was of no use and did not represent change in the status quo; presumably that there would be no greater help on the part of the administration for faculty involved in making proposals in research, scholarship and creative activity. All of these areas were included in the research package in the ARRA. Thus the EC asked that a

clause be added to emphasize that there would especially be administrative support from the OR. The minor change was accepted by me on behalf of the RDC as a friendly amendment. The resolution so amended was then approved at the following senate meeting.

- As the year drew to a close, elections for chair and vice chairs were in order (April mtg). In the past, the chairmanship was generally taken on by a volunteer, and there usually was only one person and occasionally 2 nominees, in which case election was made by a voice or paper vote respectively. I was elected by a voice vote two years ago. The vote is taken each April, however, many chairs are re-approved yearly for as many as four years (in my history in RC), if they are willing to serve. I announced to the RC that I would be stepping down because through email I was aware of at least one person who wished to be nominated. This year the RC members wanted to conduct a formal election, and the comment was made that the vice chair should be a “chair elect” in order to have more continuity on the RC. In this way the voting process would also accommodate RC members not present. This is a signal of more faculty participation and interest in the RC and its mission.
- The Policies and Procedures chair, Peiling Wang, set up the election process on a Blackboard site. In this election the RC will vote for either of two candidates, William Hofmeister and Ken Stephenson. Voting closes on this site Monday, May 4, 2009. At that point the new chair will be announced. I will communicate the result to J. Nolt and T. Boulet.

#### Summary:

I have been honored to serve as chair of the RC for two years. In that time I have witnessed and applauded increasing participation by RC members. There is far less tension between RC faculty members, and the administrators who speak in each meeting (Reed and Fenwick) as well as the ex officio administrative members. I believe the RC has turned a corner in that there has been a tangible change in the OR. The OR leadership has undertaken energetic and affirmative reorganization leading to greater efficiency, and has sent positive rhetoric toward faculty scholars. There is a collaborative relationship between administration and faculty in the RC, and greater faculty participation.

My suggestions for the future would be to make a careful review of the RC subcommittee structure and have the RC streamline itself. The RC decided this would be a goal for fall 09. Task forces were used in 08-09 when specific work was needed; many of the subcommittees were inactive. The RC functions better as an organic group, in my view, rather than through its subcommittees.

That said, outsiders to the RC may not be aware that there has been “change we can believe in” concerning the administration-faculty relationship. That the RC faculty members lacked a voice and that more time was spent on administrative matters was a fair assessment two or three years ago. Several RC veterans and I tried to inject enthusiasm for faculty dialogue in the RC that I participated in when I became an RC member about 8 years ago. From the outset of their tenure, Fenwick and Reed have had a good working relationship with the RC and with me. They are receptive to faculty needs.

Economic circumstances have prevented the meeting of some needs, but these are included in the research part of the strategic plan. Even in these dark economic times, the number of research proposals submitted is at an all-time high. Brad Fenwick announced in the April RC meeting that, for the first time, the major source of University revenue is now research dollars. All is not rosy. Yet my advice to future faculty leaders is to preserve and improve this cooperative, transparent relationship in the research sector, and determine whether this cooperative mode can be applied in other areas of shared governance. I look forward to continuing as an RC member.

Thank you for your support and leadership,

Joanne

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