The Advisory Committee to the Vice President for Research (AC/VPR)

Summary of the

General AC/VPR

Meeting

February 4, 2013 from 3-5 pm

University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus

Members Present: Eve Bannet, David Boeck, Fred Carr, David Craig, Pat Hardre, Karen Hayes-Thumann, Marguerite Keesee, Hazem Refai, George Richter-Addo, Ed Sankowski, Musharraf Zaman

VPR Office Staff Present: Kelvin Droegemeier, James Grimsley, Alicia Knoedler, Cathi Parker

Distributed Documents:
1. Contingency Planning for Federal Budget Sequestration (hardcopy)
2. Call for Nominations, Faculty Research and Creative Activity Awards (hardcopy)
3. Director of Research Initiatives-draft (hardcopy)
4. Higher education in transformation-Challenge and Change (hardcopy)

VPR Update: Dr. Droegemeier welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an overview of the agenda Action items and Information items.

Federal budget outlook and planning for sequestration: Dr. Droegemeier gave a brief overview. The purpose of the memo produced by the VPR Office was to heighten awareness and promulgate a series of principles of what to expect from the VPR Office. Sequestration, in some form, is going to happen. Institutional priorities are highlighted on the memo distributed by the VPR Office. Plans are to continue to be aggressive, protect graduate students, no cuts of SRI, freeze Research Council budget if needed, we are trying to broaden our portfolio with the Department of Defense; no reallocations are planned at OU this year. There was no push back from faculty on the potential policy. Comments: are we doing any planning in regards to DOD projected cuts? Faculty are traveling to DARPA this month, there are huge opportunities available and we’re starting to land some of these. Unmanned systems will get money, we’re trying to land one of six systems; cyber security is a big area.

Re-structuring the VPR awards: The VPR Office is considering the restructure of the Faculty Research and Creative Activity Awards. Comments: what do we want to think about to move forward? Suggestions: widen the nominating procedure; should faculty self-apply instead of departments; it’s a waste of time to ask for external letters for smaller awards; bring more clarity to the description for the VPR Award for Outstanding Research Impact and the VPR Award for Outstanding Research Engagement; concern with the quality of nominations; two years in a row the VPR Office had to extend the deadline due to lack of nominees; create a “Top Researcher” award and have committee make selections; select award winners at the same time as the tenure process; should the VPR Office nominate faculty instead of departments and then have a committee make the final selections; what about non-faculty, there is nothing for post-docs and non-faculty, can this be broadened beyond faculty; why aren’t faculty submitting nominations; talk to Research Liaisons/Chairs, why aren’t nominations happening; why are submission rates so low?
Diversity Activities (handout provided): A new position has been created which will report jointly to the Vice President for Research and the Associate Vice President for Research and Director of CRPDE. The title for the position is Director of Research Diversity Initiatives and came about due to the EPSCoR proposal requirements; both comments on the EPSCoR proposal were about diversity. There will be an open community meeting at OU to discuss the position and a search committee will be created to select the candidate. This is a staff position, not faculty and is needed to assist faculty with the new requirements in proposals. Comments: will person be part of assembling data mentioned previously; will anti-affirmative action impact this, answer: no, any initiatives to do with federal funding aren’t impacted; how can the University make sure that minority students succeed, we need to engage them early on.

Higher education in transformation: Dr. Droegemeier provided a hardcopy of the article “Challenge and Change” by George L. Mehaffy. This is a comprehensive read on higher education in transformation.

STEM and undergraduate research activities: The STEM Education Charette will be held on February 16 in The Core. Enrollment is limited to 36 individuals and will set forth goals for STEM Education at OU.

Federal policy on open access: Policies are coming out from federal agencies describing how to manage data. Data will have to be put online. OU has hands around it.

Research Campus Update: Dr. Droegemeier provided an update on the Research Campus. The Radar Innovations Laboratory is under construction; Five Partners Place will break ground soon and the VPR Office will be relocated there on the Third Floor, completion is expected in Fall 2014; a Water Innovations Research Laboratory is tentatively planned.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on May 23 at 3-5 p.m. in the Charlie Conference Room.