The Advisory Committee to the Vice President for Research (AC/VPR)
Summary of the General AC/VPR Meeting
February 23, 2011 from 3-5 pm
University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus

Members Present: Musharraf Zaman, David Craig, Heather Basara, Noel Brady, Emily Meazell, Michael Ashby, Eve Bannet, Mary Margaret Holt, Hazem Refai, James Grimsley, Joe Rodgers, James Patterson, Khosrow Bozorgi, George Richter-Addo

VPR Office Present: Kelvin Droegemeier, Alicia Knoedler, Shawn Snidow

Distributed Documents:
1. VPR Overview (hardcopy)

VPR Update and Overview: Dr. Droegemeier thanked everyone for attending and provided a brief overview of the status of the VPR Office and programs.

- The state and federal budgets are uncertain for the rest of FY2011 and for FY2012.
  - The budget bill passed by Congress will not likely be approved as it is. However, it includes considerable budget cuts for federal agencies including the NEH, NSF, NIH, NOAA, and NEA.
  - The Oklahoma State budget certification is $106 million greater than anticipated, though this increase is relative to a low value last year.
  - The VPR Office will continue to encourage outside engagements and faculty seeking opportunities to fund and promote their research.

- As President Boren alerted faculty, OU has now been classified as a Carnegie Very High Research Institution thanks to the hard work of the faculty and researchers.

- The new VPR website is operational and includes more information than the old webpage. Please check it out at http://vpr-norman.ou.edu. If you have suggestions for additions to the website or ways to improve it, please share your ideas with Dr. Droegemeier or Deborah Marsh.

- Three new Aspire 2020 Action Teams have been announced. You can participate by attending the action team meetings and through online postings and commentary at https://aspire2020.ou.edu. The three Action Teams and the co-leaders are:
  - Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity: Drs. Michele Eodice and Joy Pendley
  - Graduate Research and Creative Activity: Drs. Randa Shehab and Joe Rodgers
  - Education Research and Creative Activity: Drs. Pat Hardre and Mark Nanny

- A set of operating policies is now being created for the nascent Center for Applied Research and Development (CARD) by an ad hoc faculty task force. It is hoped that CARD will begin operations this summer. It will have a director and small staff. CARD will facilitate faculty and researcher connections with outside entities requiring applied research. It will be a home for self-funded full-time researchers, but will not supplant the post-docs and full-time non-faculty researchers in other programs.
The DSI director search is going well. Twenty-three people applied and the initial screening has been completed. Dr. Droegemeier hopes to have someone on board by summer.

Fourteen nominations for the VPR Awards have been evaluated by a multi-disciplinary committee. Winners will be announced during the Spring Faculty Tribute.

Joy Pendley has been hired to facilitate the VPR Office engagement with undergraduate research. She is a co-leader of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Aspire 2020 Action Team, which is charged with recommending actionable items to help develop an institutional framework for engaging undergraduate research.

Update from Alicia Knoedler: Dr. Knoedler updated the AC about the status of CRPDE and related programs.

- The CRPDE website is in a transition to a version similar to the new VPR website. Please spread the word about http://crpde.ou.edu.
- Dr. Knoedler looks forward to announcing three new workshops for Arts and Humanities fellowships, NSF CAREER grants, and Fulbright Scholarships soon.
- The Research Liaison (RL) will meet for the first time on March 2. RLs will meet once more in April, followed by a reception in May. You can find out who the RL in your department is on the new VPR website.
- The Challenge Grant notices of intent are due March 1. The notice of intent is not requested for evaluative purposes, but instead will allow Dr. Knoedler to identify appropriate reviewers by the time full proposals are due. Two more information sessions will occur in early March to help applicants better understand the process and expectations associated with the Challenge Grant.
- Dr. Knoedler received 18 notices of intent for the USO re-competition. She listed basic demographic characteristics of the PIs and co-PIs and a variety of uses for the award money as identified in those notifications.
- Dr. Knoedler noted that both the Challenge Grant and USO re-competitions have allowed her to better know the interests and research areas of faculty and researchers. She hopes to use this knowledge to better identify and connect faculty with funding opportunities.
- Applications for two Associate Directors of CRPDE are being accepted. One Associate Director will be located in Tulsa and the other one will join Dr. Knoedler on the Norman campus.

Miscellaneous Topics Discussed During the Updates:

- Dr. Droegemeier mentioned that 3PP would soon be adorned with wall art depicting the various research accomplishments of faculty. Dr. Bannet suggested distributing similar wall hangings and displays throughout other buildings on main campus where students will be able to see them and be inspired.
- AC members have a sense that some faculty feel overwhelmed with the mass dissemination of VPR email and information. Different suggestions for sending messages more effectively were:
  - specifically targeting relevant audiences
  - providing more information about the ways particular messages are relevant to specifically targeted audiences
  - continuing to send mass emails, but follow them with personal communication.
Dr. Droegemeier acknowledged the frustration and noted that he does not want to only take a targeted approach at the expense of missing other qualified and interested faculty members. He expects the new RLs to help identify faculty who are interested in opportunities in specific areas and fields.

- Dr. Knoedler noted that the new CRPDE website will have a page for faculty and groups to place calls for collaborators. Individual faculty members will be able to search the listings to find potential collaboration opportunities.
- Dr. Richter-Addo suggested that it may be useful for the RLs to have a space for socializing, meeting, and networking.
- Dr. Droegemeier asked for feedback about his VPR Blog. He said he wants the blogs to be brief, fact-oriented updates about the VPR Office. Dr. Bannet suggested he call it “About Us.” Dr. Basara suggested that Dr. Droegemeier use the blog to inspire and motivate people by drawing attention to the exciting things happening in the diverse fields of research and creative activities across campus.

**AC Member Feedback and Discussion:** Dr. Droegemeier asked the AC members for feedback regarding the new programs and changes that have taken place over the past year.

- Drs. Patterson and Bozorgi said they have seen a change in the College of Architecture, commending Dr. Droegemeier for his enthusiasm and energy. They see a culture change occurring. The new culture is one that is much more supportive of research efforts in their college and across campus.
- Dr. Craig noted that the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication is experiencing a similar change. Last year, some faculty were skeptical that concrete changes would come from all of Dr. Droegemeier’s talks and initiatives, but the quick implementation of concrete reforms and programs has helped many see a culture change. The biggest challenge, however, is faculty who are situated in the humanities and do not see a clear connection to the VPR Office.
- Dr. Droegemeier followed up by asking how he and the VPR Office can help faculty who work independently, such as those in the humanities, feel connected with the VPR Office and feel valued for their research and creative activities. When asked, “What do they need?” Dr. Bannet responded, “Time.”
- Prof. Holt noted that in the Weitzenhoffe Family College of Fine Arts there was also some initial skepticism about the extent to which the Aspire 2020 Arts and Humanities Action Team (last year) would lead to real change. The option for teaching release as a use of Challenge Grant money has been encouraging, but many of the issues outlined by the A&H Action Team remain concerns.
- Dr. Refai said the new programs find a balance between helping faculty in the beginning stages of sponsored research and faculty who have a history of success with sponsored research. He would like to see OU faculty develop stronger relationships various directors of federal funding programs in order to increase opportunities.
- Dr. Bannet described the “Humanities Center” at Texas A&M, saying it is a nice model to consider for OU. Because a humanities center on campus would not need a permanent space, $100K would go a long way toward bringing speakers to campus and providing opportunities for collaboration and cooperation throughout the humanities.
- Mr. Grimsley shared his perspective as a University outsider and private industry representative, saying that these programs are an investment and suggesting that the VPR
Office be patient if they do not immediately see returns on that investment. It may take a couple of years, but Mr. Grimsley said, as a private industry collaborator with the University, these changes are exciting.

- Dr. Meazell, speaking from the Law College point of view, explained that initial excitement is starting to fade. She made a few suggestions: 1) Email correspondence and calls for collaboration for proposals clearly could identify concrete ways in which Law faculty should be involved. 2) An information workshop on the basics of getting started with sponsored research may be useful. 3) The VPR sponsorship of small group research sharing events, which would bring together faculty from diverse departments but working in similar research areas would be helpful for initiating collaborations.

- Dr. Richter-Addo explained that the amount of time faculty spend administering their own grants takes considerable time away from their research. He suggested that finding a way to provide department level support for such administrative needs would be invaluable and referenced such a model used at the University of Michigan.

- Dr. Rodgers suggested that a conference center or an on-campus location for visitor lodging would have a return investment in the ability to attract national and international level conferences and meetings, which would improve the visibility of OU and the host departments.

- Dr. Brady explained that an important part of training and placing graduate students in Math is through outreach service activities. He would like to see a stronger connection between the STEM fields and education research. Dr. Droegemeier replied that the major purpose of the Education Research and Creative Activities Aspire 2020 Action Team is to work on this very issue of connecting the College of Education with other researchers on campus.

- Dr. Zaman asked that college level resources be accounted for as the VPR develops new programs. Internal competition for college level resources to be distributed and awarded at the discretion of the college would be help with new projects. Dr. Zaman mentioned that faculty receiving internal grants should be held to the highest standards of accountability and that the VPR Office should gather data about the success of funded projects.

Dr. Droegemeier wrapped up the meeting by thanking everyone who came for their thoughts and feedback. He intends for future AC/VPR meetings to follow a format similar to this meeting, during which AC members provide most of the discussion.

**Next Meeting:** The next General AC/VPR Meeting will take place Monday, May 2 from 3-5pm in the Charlie Conference Room of 3PP.

Summary composed by Shawn M. Snidow