COMMISSION ON RESEARCH
February 14, 2007
325 Burruss Hall
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.


Invited Guests: K. Miller and T. Pickering

Others: P. Pettry

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Dr. Roberto convened the meeting. She added an additional item to the agenda under other business - COR representatives whose terms will expire – the Library Committee representative and the chair of the Commission. The agenda was approved with this addition.

2. **Approval of Minutes of December 6, 2006:** Dr. Roberto asked for approval of the minutes of the December meeting. The minutes were approved.

3. **Task Force on Research Integrity Procedures and Policies (Grange):** Dr. Grange reported on the progress the task force has made on the research integrity procedures and policies. One of the reasons for the change in policy is a mandate from Health and Human Services. The task force hopes to have the document to university governance by the end of March or early April. Dr. Grange described the process and the different possible scenarios with a charge of misconduct. Discussion followed on the responsibilities of the Research Integrity Officer. Suggestions were made to address the wording in the document to include undergraduate, graduate, staff, and faculty levels. Dr. Grange said the task force should have a final draft of the policies and procedures in about a month, which would then be brought before the Commission. Once the Commission approves, it would then proceed through the governance system.

4. **Updates:***
   a. **Office of Sponsored Programs**
      i. **Processes and Procedures:** Dr. Grange expressed concerns with the Office of Sponsored Programs, specifically lack of efficient response time to requests and training in policies. Dr. Roberto questioned if he had discussed his concerns with Mr. Richardson or Ms. Bucy. Dr. Phillips noted that some of the problems with OSP services may be a result of low salaries and high turnover that may be a result of the stress level of the pre-award officers. Dr. Pickering said that staff issues are being addressed; most recently, a career ladder, with adjusted salaries, has been implemented. Dr. Grange said the service is getting better, but it can be much better. Discussion continued about the need for a
survey of the faculty. Dr. Roberto suggested waiting until the new Assistant Vice President is appointed. Members agreed that the COR should meet with the Assistant VP as soon as s/he is appointed and offer our services in assessing the concerns of the faculty and strategizing solutions.

ii. **Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration:** Dr. Pickering reported that the position announcement for the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Programs Administration has been posted in a variety of locations. The review of applications will begin March 5, 2007. He stated the search committee has met and that they plan to involve the Commission in the interview process. Dr. Pickering said the goal is to have the Assistant Vice President on board by July 1.

b. **Searches:**
   i. **Research Integrity Officer:** Dr. Pickering reported the Research Integrity Officer position has been approved and the job description is almost complete. This will, most likely, be an internal hire of a relatively senior faculty member.

   ii. **Post Approval Monitor (PAM) Officer:** Dr. Pickering stated the post approval monitor position will be a staff position and will report to the Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance. It will be advertised as an open position for on- and off-campus individuals.

c. **Center Reviews:** Dr. Pickering reported the two center reviews (Virginia Center for Housing Research and the Virginia Water Resources Research Center) are progressing on schedule. There have been 2 to 3 meetings of each review committee.

d. **Institute Charter -- ICTAS:** Dr. Roberto stated that the charter for the Institute for Critical Technologies and Applied Sciences (ICTAS) will be presented at the March meeting. Dr. Roop Mahajan, director of ICTAS, will attend the meeting and provide a brief presentation about ICTAS and highlight key points in the charter.

5. **Other Business:**
   a. **Certification of Departmental Administrative and Business Practices (Internal Controls) Compliance:** Mr. Miller reported that as a result of a request in the BOV Audit Committee last August, a certification process of administrative and business practices is being set up. The state controller’s office has required this type of information as well. He stated the Survey Research Center has helped in setting up a survey, and that this survey will be vetted with a pilot group prior to distribution to departments. Dr. Kapania expressed concern with the time required by the department heads/directors in completing this task and taking away from more scholarly activities. A suggestion was made to have a senior person be responsible for collecting all information requested, whether survey or annual report, filling out the respective document and then having the department head/director sign. Mr. Miller said completing the survey is a requirement and that everyone will need to work together to protect our current resources. He also said this process will reveal areas in which improvements in business practices need to be made.
b. **Overhead Rate Increase (hand-out):** Mr. Miller explained the three reasons for the increase in the overhead rate: (1) In the past, the University dealt with DHHS and their mode of operation was whatever was submitted would be discounted. We now deal with ONR and they operate on the principle of what you submit is what you get. (2) The new buildings, Latham, the VBI buildings, Vivarium, and leases for the buildings at the CRC, are debt funded and this adds to the indirect cost pool; and (3) The increase in utility costs; Mr. Miller reported the University’s contract with electricity is being renegotiated and will be going up 28% and that administrative costs are capped at 26%. Concerns were expressed regarding the continued cutting of funds by the federal government, issues with faculty summer salary, and difficulties created when agreements are made to take less than the full overhead rate. Dr. Grange mentioned the need for an action plan. Dr. Pickering said the nature of the issues and the problems are well recognized and that any sound proposal would be well received and pursued. Dr. Henneke said the real problem is lack of resources; the university tries to be everything to everyone and thus spreads the resources too thin.

c. **NSF Expenditure Report:** Mr. Miller reported there was good growth on federal grants and contracts, with the University’s activity up about 11%. He stated that although there was an increase of almost $32M, our ranking for 2005 was 56, which was down one position from the previous year.

d. **Representatives whose terms will expire:** Dr. Roberto indicated that Ms. Gray’s term on the Commission ends this year and asked that she work with the Library to name a new library member to the Commission. Dr. Roberto also asked that nominations for chair of the 2007-08 Commission be submitted to Ms. Pettry by email prior to the March meeting.

6. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.