COMMISSION ON RESEARCH
October 10, 2007
President’s Board Room – 210 Burruss Hall
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.


Invited Guests: C. Gray, T. Pickering, D. Leo, K. C. Das, S. Schoenholtz

Others: D. Nester

1. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

2. Introductions: Robert Grange, Chair

3. Elect a Vice-Chair for CoR: Dr. Huckle said he is willing to be the Vice-Chair. No other nominations made. The motion was moved for Dr. Huckle to act as Vice-Chair of Commission. The motion was seconded and approved.

4. Receipt and approval of reports from the two committees that reviewed the Waters Center and the Housing Center – Tim Pickering: Dr. Grange announced that Dr. Pickering would introduce to the committee the reports from the two committees from last year’s Commission that reviewed the Water Center and the Housing Center. Tim pointed out that the committee received a copy of the reports. He said that there is a commission policy on these centers and it requires after every five years there is a review of the center. The main responsibility of the review committee is to determine whether or not the center is meeting its commission statement, whether it should be reauthorized for another period, comment on whether or not the director is doing a effective job, and whether the director should be re-appointed. Tim Pickering gave the procedures of the review.

Water Center - What the committee found in its review is that over this five year period the Water Center had been really more focused on what we would call outreach activity than educational activity and a research agenda. It’s believed part of that is because of the state and federal funding that they have interaction with the community and all that you can do under the area of water resources. The committee felt that it was going to be a university research center that they would like to see a more robust research program. One of the recommendations was made to the Director, Dr. Stephen Schoenholtz, to see what he could do to make it a more robust research program. The review committee presented a number of other recommendations in the report, recommended overall the university have the Water Center, and was pleased to have Dr. Schoenholtz here to be the Director. Hence, the Water Center should be given authorization to go forward for another five year period.
Tim gave Dr. Schoenholtz, Water Center Director, an opportunity to respond to the report. Dr. Schoenholtz said that the review was initiated before he arrived at Virginia Tech and it was helpful to get the viewpoints from the review team. He sought out as much feedback from the review team as he could to determine where the Water Center had been and what some of the priorities should be.

Given the transition of oversight from the Office of Research to the College of Natural Resources, Hall questioned whether the Water Center was still a university center. He suggested that the commission vote on approval of the report pending the decision from the Provost about the status of the Water Center as a university center.

The motion was moved to accept the review and its recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved. *(Subsequent to the meeting Provost McNamee confirmed that the center should be a university center, although the director reports to Dean Kelly).*

**Housing Center** - Ms. Gray gave the overview for the Housing Center. Ms. Gray gave the background of the review process. The committee recommends that the Housing Center be continued. One of the final recommendations was that the Housing Center host a campus-wide housing symposium as a way to seek out other faculty and people associated with housing. This may be an opportunity to create new partnerships and funding.

Casey Dawkins, Housing Center Director, made some comments and announced he has been the director for 18 months, 2 years in January, 2008.

The motion was moved to approve this report and its recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved.

Dr. Grange thanked all the members of the committee and Dr. Pickering for organizing, collecting, and assimilating the information for these reports.

5. **Report on VT Centers to be reviewed this year; discussion of schedule; call for review committee members – Tim Pickering:**

The Commission received a list of university centers that have not been reviewed in the last five years. There was discussion about which centers actually fall under the purview of COR. Once some further definition is provided by the administration on which centers should be reviewed under the COR umbrella, the Commission will determine which centers it wants to review this year. Dr. Grange will work with Tim Pickering to develop a proposed schedule.

6. **Schedule and letter of request for submission of Charters from each of three VT institutes for approval by CoR – background information – Rodd Hall:**
Mr. Hall provided background on the charter process for the three newest university institutes – ICTAS, IBPHS, and ISCE. There have been several occasions when the process commenced, but was not completed. There were two main reasons for the delay:

a) institute administrators have been hesitant to submit a charter without a director being in place
b) COR has been hesitant to review only one of the charters without reviewing all three.

Dr. Grange indicated that he had contacted ICTAS about having its charter reviewed at the COR meeting in November. If there is any indication from the university administration that this is unnecessary, the review will be cancelled. *(Post-meeting note: The ICTAS charter review will take place in November).*

7. Changes in the Office of Research – emphasis on service to VT faculty - Rodd Hall:

Dr. Grange asked Mr. Hall to give an overview of the changes envisioned for the Office of Research under Dr. Walters’ leadership. He said that the major intent is to get away from the conflicts that have happened between colleges and the Office of Research in the past. The two major themes for the office will be customer service and research partnership. Mr. Hall will be primarily responsible for the customer service focus and Dr. Inzana will be responsible for research partnerships. Hall’s team, including Sponsored Programs, VTIP, and the Proposal Development team will work to directly serve the university community, providing proactive service from concept to the marketing of intellectual property. Dr. Inzana will be working with center directors and stakeholders to assure that the Office is working in concert with the academic units to facilitate new and existing research. The overriding goal of the office is to enable research, not control research.

8. Other Business

a. Topics for Commission business over the course of the year?
Robert Grange sent out an email of the two or three things that the Commission might consider during the course of the year. So far he has not received any suggestions but he has some and they are:

1. Library resources. They are underfunded. They have done a remarkable job but, he thinks, especially if we are going to have a joint medical school with Carilion that our library resources need to improve dramatically.
2. Office of Sponsored Programs performance.
3. Vivaria Cost Center. With the new Vivarium coming on-line in the life sciences building in early 2008, determinations need to be made about how the services are going to be paid for. Follow up is needed from committee work that initiated the process of a centralized service center last year.

9. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.