

MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL
January 17, 2008

2:30PM Administration Bldg. Conference Room 404

Meeting Minutes

Absent Members: Jackie Huntoon, Jay Meldrum

Review First Quarter 2008 Sponsored Programs Report to Board of Control – Handouts provided to the Council by Dave Reed.

The Council reviewed the first quarter Sponsored Programs financial data. The Federal award dollars are down from the same quarter last year due to the new Federal budget being approved in late December 2007 which slowed down all Federal activity including grants and contracts.

After review of the research expenditure information Dave was asked how Michigan Tech compares to other institutions in the internal expenditure category; Dave stated we are at 40% which is normal for an institution of our size. He was also asked what he would like our internal expenditure percentage to be; to which he replied that 30-50% is the common range so we are doing well at 40%. He informed the council that awards have a fluctuating trend and with our numbers being higher for the past two years we may see a downward trend this fiscal year. Julie Seppala added that her staff has recently seen an increase in Federal award contract set-up and she is confident that we will see the Federal award information rise in the upcoming quarters. Dave was also asked if the Michigan Tech Research Institutes collaborations with Michigan Tech have developed and he stated that they have exceeded our optimistic range of expectations. There are collaborations with Departments, Centers & Institutes, faculty, staff, and students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. If anyone is interested in a collaboration list please contact Cathy Banfield.

Technology and Development Reports were within the normal ranges and Dave Reed noted that Michigan Tech is ranked 16th in the country for rate of commercialization of technologies per dollars of research.

A point was made in the discussions that Department of Energy solicitations have dropped off recently with the DOE showing a trend towards biofuels research.

Dave Reed also informed the council members that they are welcome to request additional financial or statistical information from the VPR office at anytime. Please send Cathy Banfield an email with your request.

Misconduct Policy Procedure – Handout provided by Joanne Polzien electronically prior to the meeting.

Joanne asked the committee for comments on the Misconduct Procedures language. The council members had no comments or changes to implement and approved the language of the procedures which will be signed by Dave Reed and implemented. She thanked the Senate Research Policy Committee for the time and effort they put into refining this document.

Joanne informed the council that the National Science Foundation Office of Inspector General will be on campus February 12, 2008 to conduct workshops on research integrity and compliance. There will be additional information regarding this visit announced in the near future. She also provided two handouts; Responsible Conduct of Research website and the upcoming February NSF OIG visit informational website.

The Graduate Student training for responsible conduct of research will be mandatory soon. It was mentioned that the Graduate Faculty Council is concerned about the amount of time required for the on-line responsible conduct of research training program (six to eight hours). Joanne did acknowledge the training requires an investment of time by the user but she also pointed out the training can be accomplished in numerous sessions. Because of the likelihood of this training being federally mandated in the very near future, all faculty, staff, and students involved in the conduct or administration of research contracts or grants may wish to start this training program now.

Draft Proposal for Space Requirement Information – Handout Anita Quinn

The council discussed the proposed signature requirements for the Research and Sponsored Programs Transmittal Sheet and agreed that these new requirements would prompt the necessary space commitment conversations that should take place prior to the paperwork being submitted to the sponsor, however perhaps there needs to be a simplified version of the proposal. Anita Quinn will meet with her staff to determine what parts could be handled internally by her contract officers and how the remaining information should be added to the current Proposal Transmittal Sheet. Anita will make the necessary changes to the form and send a copy of that page electronically for the RAC to review.

The Council opened the floor for new business:

Anita Quinn asked the council to discuss the benefits of encouraging principle investigators to include academic year release time in their federally sponsored project budgets if there will be new equipment needs for that project. The release time would have to be real time and allocable to the project. The purchase of the equipment would be completed utilizing department general fund dollars. The university would then hold

title of the equipment and be able to use it however they chose and would not be limited by Federal regulations during and after the project is completed. Additionally, if the P.I. were to leave the institution and was transferring projects the equipment would not necessarily be transferrable. Anita will meet with the Engineering Council to increase the awareness, and ask for their input regarding this sponsored project budgeting concept. She will keep the RAC up-to-date with her findings.

Julie Seppala asked to revisit the council members request to have the Banner accounting statements modified to make them more user friendly for the P.I.s'. To date she has not received any specific requests from the members and she asked them to send Cathy Banfield their requests regarding financial reports. Cathy will compile the requests and provide them to the Julie who will bring her conclusions to a future RAC meeting. It was mentioned that perhaps a glossary of terms might be a useful tool when reviewing account statements.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 4PM.

Cathy Banfield will contact the council members with the April RAC meeting information.