

MTU RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

January 29, 2007

2:00-3:30PM

Admin. Conference Room 404

MINUTES

Approval of October Meeting Minutes

Anita Quinn requested that the minutes from the October meeting be revised. The Council reviewed and approved the changes. Cathy Banfield will revise the minutes and send them electronically to the council members.

Research Financial Data 2nd Quarter 2007

Dave Reed presented financial handouts to the council containing the fiscal year 2007 2nd quarter numbers that will be presented to the Board of Control on February 22, 2007.

Additional discussion: Foreign research dollars are tracked for John Ahola, Director of Public Safety due to his reporting requirements for campus security purposes. Foreign research dollars are all contracts MTU has with foreign businesses. Research Expenditures are up for the first half of this fiscal year. Licensing activity has remained the same or at least even with last year's figures. MTU had seventeen untenured faculty submit to the prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award. Three have been awarded: Chunxiao Chigan of Electrical & Computer Engineering, Ranjit Pati of Physics, and Zhenlin Wang of Computer Science. There are two MTU submissions that are still pending at this time.

There were no questions from the council regarding the financial information.

Jackie Huntoon gave additional NSF information. MTU will host NSF day, tentatively set for fall of 2008. NSF encouraged MTU to extend an invitation to any Native American tribal colleges in the local area to attend this event. NRC web surveys are happening now and NSF is coming up soon. NRC surveys were distributed to faculty, department chairs and students. Jackie along with Rich Elenich of Institutional Analysis are completing the institutional survey. NSF surveys are looking for quality and satisfaction from the graduate students. Due to fluctuation in requirements, it is difficult to pinpoint what data is the most important.

Postdoctoral Salaries

Dave Reed asked the council to dismiss the first postdoc salary handout entitled "Postdoctoral Research Fellow" as it is not current. Cathy Banfield will send the most current information to the council electronically. The current postdoc salary range is \$30 - \$50K. In comparison to the NIH and NSF ranges (see handouts) Dave asked the council "Does MTU need to modify the current salary ranges?" A point was raised that when considering postdoc salaries, benefits and the length of appointment need to be considered. The university strategic plan calls for funding of more PhD students. The salary ranges have not been adjusted since 2002. This is an internal policy and an increase is not mandatory. Any newly funded postdocs would be affected by the change in salary ranges. The Council motioned and approved an increase in salary range to \$35 - \$55K. The Vice President for Research Office will implement this change and communicate it to the campus community.

Council Meetings

Due to the lack of agenda items on a monthly basis, it was discussed and decided by the council that meetings will be set based upon agenda items submitted by the council. If there is a lack of agenda items, the meeting will be postponed.

The council members then gave some ideas for upcoming meeting topics:

Health Insurance for Graduate Students with dependants (Grad Students are insured but their dependents are not, which can create financial hardship. A lengthy discussion followed, and the council agreed that this issue is very important, but at the same time, it is a university administration issue that should be monitored in the future.

Strategic Planning. A Research Computing Committee has been formed but has not had a meeting as of yet. Perhaps the council members on that committee (Don Beck, and Julie Seppala) could provide an update to the council at the end of spring semester?

It was suggested that Julie Seppala of Research Accounting could do a presentation to the council to educate them on award finance from budget to index management. Pat Martin suggested that she could use his E28197 as an example. Julie suggested that the council members send specific finance questions to Cathy Banfield who can compile and distribute the results to Julie.

Travel Reimbursement Policy

Terry McNinch informed the council that he received notification from Sherry Kauppi, Director of Human Resources that a policy is to be implemented which will allow the University to retain reimbursement checks of those employees who owe debt (parking tickets, library fees, etc) to the University. This action resolved Terry's research travel reimbursement agenda item, however he expressed his dismay that this type of policy could be implemented.

The Council meeting adjourned at 3:25PM.