

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE  
Research Policy and Advisory Committee

**Minutes**

October 29, 2021; 2:00 p.m.

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**1. Call to order and approval of the agenda**

Robin Mello called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. There were no changes to the agenda.

Members Present:

Paul Brodwin, Liam Callanan, Noelle Chesley, Janis Eells, Jennifer Haas, Ann Hanlon, Mark Harris (ex officio), Jennifer Jordan, Jay Kapellusch, Robin Mello (chair), Kate Mollen (ex officio); Michael Pauers, Jason Puskar (ex officio); Kristin Roosevelt

Members Absent:

Alan Wiseman

Guests:

Kathleen Koch, Jeremy Miner, Kristian O'Connor, Michelle Schoenecker, Kari Whittenberger-Keith (Office of Research); Peter Schwander (ITPC liaison)

**2. Approval of the minutes**

The minutes of the October 1, 2021 meeting were approved as distributed.

**3. Introduction of Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Programs**

Kate Mollen, Director, Office of Sponsored Programs, introduced Jeremy Miner, the new Associate Director for Pre-award in OSP. He briefly described his background. He most recently was Director of Grants and Contracts at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and is a "second generation" research administrator. He has more than 20 years of progressively increasing responsibility and experience with health care, academic, and social service environments.

**4. GFC Charter**

Noelle Chesley, Graduate Faculty Committee (GFC) Representative, asked RPAC members to endorse a change in the GFC charter that would remove the RPAC chair as an ex-officio member.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the RPAC chair as an ex-officio member of the GFC. RPAC members expressed support for the motion, especially in light of reduced faculty numbers, stating that cross representation on the two committees can be simplified, the dean of the Graduate School could fill this role, and that support staff can issue invitations to specific meetings when relevant topics are on the agenda.

The motion passed.

The RPAC also will look at its charter at a future meeting.

## 5. **RPAC Advocacy**

RPAC chair, Robin Mello, offered the following topics to begin the discussion:

- \*funding and budget models
- \*support for PIs and support for developing funding
- \*Support for support (including the Office of Research, Graduate students, Library and IRB)
- \*Retaining and supporting productive faculty
- \*Recruiting new faculty in areas that have future potential
- \*Acknowledging the array of research on campus as an asset
- \*How do we nurture a culture of research and a research community?

Comments from RPAC members and guests included:

The decrease in research spending parallels the decrease in the number of faculty; however, proportionally, faculty numbers have dropped more than research spending. UWM is stronger in the areas of degrees awarded and publications than research funding. Student enrollment drives faculty numbers (with tuition as our main source of funding). The indirect cost rate reimburses approximately 75% of overall campus costs for research infrastructure (e.g. facilities, compliance, OSP). We need a portion of GPR or tuition to support research.

Certain fields require more funding, typically engineering and natural sciences. These align with areas of interest for federal funders. Having a medical school would increase funding.

We need to be careful though not to focus only on areas of high funding; university scholarship is much broader. Make sure arts and humanities are included; they are part of the broader university mission. Colleagues in the arts and humanities need to be more involved in the research agenda. There is a feeling that scholarship is being penalized or a burden.

It is hard to predict the right mix of large and small grants in internal awards

Collaboration is increasingly important – other universities have better resources that we can leverage. Opportunities to meet are important in fostering collaboration.

There is no systematic process for recognizing research at UWM.

There should be a process of mentoring by senior faculty/researchers

Statistical support would be beneficial.

Administrative burden remains high. Researchers need to focus on their projects, not completing complicated travel expense reports. The need for specific knowledge in areas such as purchasing is being lost with shared services.

**6. Updates from the Office of Research**

Mark Harris, Vice Provost for Research, reported the following:

Approximately 2/3 of original budget for the Research Assistance Fund has been allocated. We have made a request for additional funds from campus and will consider running some version of this program again next year. (Several members expressed appreciation and support for the program.)

The Graduate School and the Office of Research will be merged. This was one of the proposed changes from the 2030 school/college realignment group. It will be important for the person in that position to give sufficient attention to each component of the unit. There will be a 3rd associate dean at 50% to focus on some cross-cutting areas, with their portfolio evolving over the first year. RPAC members requested a more formal presentation at the next meeting, with concrete budget information and an explanation of the benefits of the merger.

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:26 p.m.