University Research Council
February 11, 2013
Meeting Summary

- **Brief discussion – Issue Concerning Hosting International Scholars:**
  
  - Kent Harries from SSOE has brought two international students into his lab. He would like to have some recommendations for any international student since the process can be burdensome. Often Kent will Skype the student to help him with the selection process.
  
  - Frits Pil receives approximately 10-15 international students request per year. He mentioned that he doesn’t usually respond unless he has some connection with the particular student.
  
  - Louise Comfort has mixed feelings on hosting international students; there are both pros and cons related to the process.
  
  - China has a significant amount of funding available for sending students to the United States. It seems that Pitt receives the majority of international requests from China. Mark verified that this is indeed the case.
  
  - Mark Redfern asked if we should review how other universities handle this process?

- **Small Grants Program (CRDF) – Application and Review Process**

  Mark Redfern asked the Council for their comments on the CRDF application and review process in the past. Below are the comments from the Council members:

  - Often, Council members have been asked to review applications that aren’t in their area of expertise. There are problems finding reviewers that are needed for unique scientific areas.
  
  - Dilemma that came up last year - reviewers were told to give some priority to junior faculty in the review process even though senior faculty applications were better quality applications. Mark thought that this should not be done at the review level, but at the funding prioritization level if at all.
  
  - How do you handle awarding faculty if they already have substantial funding from other sources? Should this be taken into consideration during review?
  
  - What should the real focus be for awarding, i.e., need versus quality?
  
  - Should other application criteria be considered: How technical should the proposals be? Focus and clarity should be important factors? Feasibility?
  
  - Should we think about giving feedback to applicants? For example, posting previous examples of good quality applications online? If so, we would need to obtain permission from the PI’s involved.
  
  - New idea: Should we develop different categories? Separating Junior Faculty and Senior Faculty?
  
  - These questions will be addressed at the next meeting and then prior to next year’s solicitation as well.

- **2013 Agency Bus Trip**

  - The Annual Agency Bus Trip is scheduled for April 7-8th, with this year’s focus on the Humanities/Social Sciences areas. We have several speakers from NSF. Mary
Grace will contact NIH and the National Endowment for the Humanities for scheduling representatives to also speak this year.

- More details regarding the trip will be discussed at the March URC Meeting.

**Monthly URC Member Research Update:**
**Dr. Nancy Baker, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences**

Highlights from Dr. Baker's Research Update:

- Most programs in the School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences are graduate level
- Our students are mostly clinically-oriented, not so much research
- There is a manpower issue in SHRS
- We don’t have access to grant writers or statisticians within SHRS
- There isn’t any infrastructure for methodology. Methodologists would be very helpful.
- Another challenge on the research side is that most of our research is in the community – in people's homes.
- Tracking patients is a very long research process, this is difficult to get funded.
- There are many non-tenured faculty in the School, both teaching and research.
- Subject testing issue: The WePay system doesn’t always work great.
- Mark Redfern mentioned that there are opportunities for potential collaboration with SHRS and other schools across campus.

*The next URC Meeting is scheduled for March 19th at 12:00 noon (University Club -3rd Fl).*