

ANNUAL REPORT
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University Research Committee

University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama

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Submitted to: Dr. John G. Thornell and Dr. Sandra Loew
Title/Committee (if applicable)

Date received

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

I. Executive Summary

This year, the Research Committee (RC) worked closely with Dr. Tanja Blackstone, the recently-appointed Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs, on several issues related to faculty research procedures and university support for research. The RC focused on two major topics: a review of the university copyright policy (in compliance with SACS requirements) and university support for faculty research. After deliberation, the RC generally approved the revised copyright policy for UNA with only one exception: Section 3 Item #4, which specifically removes “non-faculty employees of the University” from having copyright opportunities. The RC committee recommended that these employees have copyright privileges.

The second major topic that was discussed was related to the university support for grant administration. More specifically, language in the “Guidelines for the Acceptance and Use of Externally Funded Grants and Contracts” related to secretarial or administrative assistant support of grants that do not allow for costs associated with administrative support. Dr. Blackstone presented suggestions for changing section B.2 of the guidelines, a copy of which was provided to each committee member. After an hour of deliberations, Dr. Blackstone agreed to amend the language.

In addition to these topics, Dr. Blackstone suggested that the RC should include representatives from the College of Nursing and other stakeholders in the research process. The RC agreed with this suggestion, which should be an action item in the next academic year.

The RC was asked to discuss the move of UNA from Division II to Division I athletics. The committee members unanimously agreed that UNA should not move into DI sports and, in fact, some committee members presented the opinion that UNA should move into DIII sports. The committee noted that the primary mission of the university is academic and that research activities, often requiring funding, are playing a larger role in faculty evaluations and promotions. The primary concern was that increased support of athletic could adversely affect university support of research.

II. The Committee’s Charge (from the Shared Governance Document)

The charges of the University Research Committee are:

1. To serve as an advisory committee on the University’s research function and related issues
2. To serve as a screening board, recommending action for University

- released time and non-released time research grants (not including those grants given through individual college research committees)
3. To gather information on the University's research efforts and related issues, and assess University performance in these areas in light of the information obtained
 4. To propose changes in University policies, procedures, and practices on research and related issues
 5. Handle all proposals affecting University policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations"

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

The Research Committee met on October 20, 2010 and March 3, 2011. In addition, committee business, particularly in discussions related to the move from DII to DI athletics, was conducted *via* e-mail.

IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?

The RC directly dealt with Charges 1 and 4 in discussing and making recommendations regarding UNA's copyright policy as necessitated by SACS compliance. The RC agreed with most of the policy changes, although it disagreed with the requirement that non-faculty employees should not be given copyright opportunities. The committee deliberated and made recommendations regarding administrative support for research grants. Changes were suggested and given to Dr. Tanja Blackstone for emendation of current policies. The committee also made recommendations regarding the change from Division II to Division I, recommending that the move should not be made because of possible adverse consequences for university support for research.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

See section IV above.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish

A. In the coming year?

The RC will continue to discuss ways to promote research and creative activities of faculty. Further work is needed to clarify the roles of administrative assistants in grant administration, particularly for grants that do not allow direct or indirect costs. If the committee follows the recommendations of Dr. Blackstone, membership in the

committee will need to be expanded to include representatives of all stakeholders in research pursuits. This may include, but not be limited to, representatives from the colleges of business and nursing. Hopefully, with future funding, the committee will be able to disperse grants to help faculty conduct research and apply for external funding.

B. In future years?

The committee should continue to work closely with the Office of Sponsored Programs to support university research. Again, the committee will hopefully have funds to disperse to support research and creative activities.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

As noted above, the committee does not have representatives from several sectors of the university committee. The committee should deal with these issues in the coming academic year and make recommendations to Shared Governance regarding committee membership.

VIII. Comments.