Emory University Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2022
3:00-5:00 p.m. | Zoom

Attendees: Alicia DeNicola, Grace Goh, Kendra Mingo, Usha Rackliffe, Octavian Ioachimescu, Anita Corbett, Aryeh Stein, Ashima Lal, Babak Mahmoudi, Benn Konsynski, Carlos Moreno, Edjah Nduom, Erica Pitre, Florian Pohl, George Shepherd, Giacomo Negro, Kamina Pinder, Karen Sedatole, Michelle Lampl, Modele Ogunniyi, Nitika Gupta, Phillip Wolff, Richard Castillo, Roberto Franzosi, Susan Ray, Tim Holbrook, Ulemu Luhanga, Kate Yeager, Pearl Dowe, Joy McDougall, Curtis Henry, Noelle McAfee

Excused Absences: Hashem Dezhbakhsh, Elena Pesavento

Unexcused Absences: Erin Bonning, Jodie Guest, Salmon Shomade, Patrick Sullivan, Holly York

I.   **Welcome and Approval of Consent Agenda,** *Alicia DeNicola, Faculty Council Chair*

Dr. Octavian Ioachimescu moved to approve the consent agenda; Dr. Benn Konsynski seconded the motion. The motion carried**.**

II.   **Discussion of Grant Specialist Support,** *Kendra Mingo, Research Development Coordinator, Oregon State University*

Dr. DeNicola introduced Kendra Mingo, grant specialist and Research Development Coordinator at the University of Idaho. Kendra explained what grant support specialists do, what knowledge they possess, and what resources and services they offer to faculty. Faculty often are not trained to seek out and be competitive for research funding, and even those who are trained find it difficult to keep up with the ever-changing funding landscape in higher education. Experts like Kendra work with faculty of all levels in grant seeking and proposal development to help them be as competitive and successful as they can be.

There are three major areas of research grant support: Research Administration (assistance with proposal preparation and submission; research grants and contracts management and compliance), Research Development (strategic and capacity building activities to advance faculty research and grant competitiveness), and Faculty Development (activities and programs to support faculty teaching, research, and professional development). These three areas mirror the resources available at Emory: Research Administration Services (RAS), Office of Research Development (ORD), and Center for Faculty Development and Excellence (CFDE). Even though these central offices encompass a lot of different activities, other universities also have individual grant specialists at the college level to offer support on varying scales. The National Organization of Research Development Professionals identifies four pillars of the profession: Strategic Research Advancement, Communication of Research and Research Priorities, Enhancement of Collaboration and Team Science, and Proposal Support Functions. Kendra focused on the last pillar, which include activities like finding funding opportunities, developing bulletins for funding announcements, maintaining files of successful proposals, grant writing and editing, providing strategic advice on competitive proposals. Other relevant knowledge and expertise: funding opportunities across disciplines, connections to program officers, agency specific peer review processes, broader impacts, postdoc mentoring, DEI plans, budget development, institutional knowledge (policies, data, contacts, etc.)

Questions and comments from the floor:

1. How do you manage to juggle so many different grant agencies and provide support across such a broad range of disciplines?
   a. Of course, this expertise is developed over a long period of time, in my case 20 years and over 1000 proposals, but the key is also to really understand the needs of faculty and be able to adapt to their particular circumstance.
2. Faculty sometimes don't know what they need, or what is available to them, so when you ask them what they need, they may not know what is possible. How do you deal with that?
   a. Every job candidate met with our office as a part of their hiring process, and we would give feedback to the hiring committee. We would ask them to tell us about their research, about what support they needed, what training they've received before and what they would like to receive here, and to explain what kind of grants their committee members/mentors have received, and whether they might go for those same grants. Questions like these are meant to unpack their research process and identify areas of need.
3. We tend to focus too much on current need and pain points; how do we get a sense of aspiration and larger goals, and identify the obstacles in reaching them?
   a. Another question we ask the candidates: tell me what you think you would've accomplished 5 years from now. They tend to have a very well thought out plan, even if the obstacles have not surfaced yet. This is a great way to understand the varying needs of each discipline, and to balance individual needs against the overall University mission.
   b. Exploring the aspirations of not just individuals, but also the aspirations of the department and unit, which leads to conversations about proper resource allocation and strategic investments (as opposed to direct cash incentives, which might not last in the long-term).
4. I'm interested in collaborative grants: similar research is being done within different silos at Emory, how do we connect with others in different disciplines that are doing the same work?
   a. Connect with Dr. Kimberly Eck's office at Emory—they seem to be prioritizing interdisciplinary work. Constructive Collision Series is a monthly meeting of collaborators across all schools.
5. It would be really nice to have a cross-disciplinary grant expert that could help brainstorm about research topics that also come with suggestions about which grants might be appropriate.
   a. Even if we don't know off the top of our head, we could suggest strategies to begin researching funding opportunities.
6. Need help with grant budget planning, especially in the humanities where we are not taught to do this
   a. Check with RAS at Emory. You could also connect with program officers to know what they will fund or not and ask for a budget template.

III.   Executive Session

IV.   Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.