

Senate Research Committee (SRC)
December 9, 2019
Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Public Engaged Research at the University; Systemwide Strategic Plan; Office for Science and Technology Policy Request for Information on the American Research Environment; MN-GEMS Update]

PRESENT: Julie Olson (chair), Bill Arnold, Chris Cramer, John Freeman, Sumanth Gopinath, Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, Boyd Kumher, Katsumi Matsumoto, Dianne Neumark Sztainer, Matthew Pappas, Nicole Pilman, Nelson Rhodus, Ali Salavati, Shashi Shekar, Susannah Smith, Kathleen Vohs, Carston Wagner, Sarah Wahlstrom Helgren, Phil Zelazo

REGRETS: Diana Karwan, Lisa Johnston, Pamela Webb

ABSENT: Carol Carrier, Gregory Cuomo, Leslie Kennedy, Tuck LeBien, Daniel Heemstra, David Roberts, Teresa Rose-Hellekant, Vaybhav Shaw

GUESTS: Andrew Furco, associate vice president, Public Engagement; Rebecca Ropers, vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs; President Joan T.A. Gabel; April Coon, associate director, Sponsored Projects Administration

OTHERS ATTENDING: Niamh Coomey, associate reporter, Minnesota Daily

Chair Julie Olson welcomed the committee and the members introduced themselves.

1. Public Engaged Research at the University

Andrew Furco, associate vice president, Public Engagement, and Rebecca Ropers, vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs, introduced themselves and reported that an increasing number of faculty members are interested in doing work with other communities. Public engaged research is more prevalent in higher education broadly as well, Furco explained. He passed around a report released in November 2019 by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Council on Research titled Public Impact Research: Engaged Universities Making the Difference, which discusses the importance of Universities partnering with communities in research. Furco noted that public engaged research is a topic that APLU, in addition to other commissions councils, has promoted for a while, and he expected that the discussion stems in part from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute on Health (NIH), and other federal agencies looking for broader research impacts and proposals that include community partners. Furco added that community engaged research is also part of the value proposition of public land grant universities, and the legislature, in addition to other Minnesotans, are often asking the “so what” of the work done at the institution.

Furco explained that an increasing number of graduate students are also interested in masters programs or dissertations that incorporate work with community partnerships, and a [public and community-engaged research page](#) has been added to the graduate school website in answer to increasing interest for this type of research. He noted that there is growing legitimacy and support around community engaged scholarship in academic disciplines, which wasn't historically valued. Furco told members that data shows that over the last four years the institution has received \$1.4 billion dollars in grants that had a community engaged component to the grant application.

Community engaged research has always been done at the University, Furco said, but traditionally the work has been approached as a way to fulfill the outreach and public mission of the land grant institution. He said the paradigm has now shifted, and there is interest in enhancing that work beyond the service mission and integrating it with the research and teaching missions of the University. Furco noted that there are some developing initiatives to help foster this new interest, and the [Public Engagement Council](#) was formed to support, among other things, faculty and engaged scholarship at the University.

Ropers told members that one of the initiatives that has been developed and is now in a pilot program phase is a community engaged scholarship review, which is provided to faculty members that are up for promotion and tenure. The review, she explained, is an opportunity for faculty to receive feedback on their community engaged scholarship portfolio from senior scholars. Ropers passed out a memorandum of understanding (MOU) titled [Review of Community-Engaged Scholarship \(2019-2020\)](#) which outlines the terms of an engaged scholar review for a faculty candidate being considered for promotion and/or tenure at the University of Minnesota. Ropers told members that the intent with the review is to ensure that faculty members were getting a fair hearing that examines milestones related to the type of scholarship outlined in the MOU.

Ropers told members that faculty members will have to self-identify for the review, and will need to have unit leader signature on the MOU. Ropers explained that the review will likely be done around the same time as external letters, and the review is intended to inform the tenure faculty who would have an opportunity to vote on the portfolio up for promotion and tenure.

Tasoulla Hadjiyanni asked Ropers if there is a mentoring process in place to help faculty members that are up for a review. Ropers explained that there are a number of workshops available to help faculty members and researchers learn how to develop their work, and there is also an informal mentoring option available for individuals that request it. Ropers opined that the process will likely become more formal as the work develops. She told members that this is one of the first steps being taken to reduce barriers to doing community-engaged scholarship.

Olson asked if there is a similar review available for graduate students doing community-engaged scholarship. Furco told her that there is no review in place currently, but said that he has heard from graduate students that faculty does not understand the work, and he noted that idea to explore in the future.

Committee members also talked about some of the policy issues that will likely need to be addressed with the increase of community-engaged scholarship including issues with IRB, branding, indirect costs, etc.

Furco also showed members the community-engaged scholar directory, which helps individuals connect with others engaged in similar work.

Sumanth Gopinath asked if the Office for Public Engagement provides ethical guidelines to scholars that are working within communities to make sure that the partnership is productive and that communities do not feel exploited. Furco told him that the office is working on that currently, and has co-hosted a number of conversations series to discuss what is most beneficial for different communities.

2. Systemwide Strategic Plan

Olson welcomed President Gabel and explained that the committee developed recommended goals for the [five commitments outlined in the Systemwide Strategic Plan](#), with the committee's recommendations further informed, in part, by the [strategic directions](#) that Chris Cramer presented to the Board of Regents at their October board meeting. The SRC goals were provided to President Gabel in advance of the meeting. Olson told President Gabel that in addition to the directions that Cramer had identified, the SRC had identified the following goals:

- Focus on improving communication with the state of Minnesota about the research being done at the institution, including the types of research, and what value it brings to the entire state.
- Better representation of the arts and humanities, and the research conducted in those disciplines.
- Improve and broaden relationships with local industries and promote the partnerships that are already in place.
- Engage all undergraduate students in some form of research.
- Promote the concept that "research is teaching."

Olson told President Gabel that the committee also wanted to emphasize that the faculty is the institution's biggest strength, and priorities, both monetarily and in the campus culture, should reflect a community where everyone feels welcome and there is support for faculty recruitment and retention.

President Gabel told members that the goals they had outlined were helpful and she appreciated that the committee provided research goals for each of the five commitments in the strategic plan. She noted that the committee clearly sees attributes of the research enterprise in all facets of the University's future, and she plans to amplify that as the consultation process continues.

She told members that broad communication about research at the University has traditionally been about new discoveries, interesting exhibits or key partnerships rather than a narrative explaining that the institution does a lot of research about a lot of things, and the outcome of that work is beneficial to communities. She emphasized that external communications that focus on

that messaging could help bridge the gap between the researchers and the communities that are impacted by the research being done at the University. She told members that it is important for the University community to tell a story about research that is digestible and that explains that the work being done at the institution is for everyone, even if it cannot be done by everyone. In an effort to tell this story, she reported, Matt Kramer, vice president, University Relations, is developing an online tool that mimics a basic google map but that pins research initiatives around the state and then directs users to a wiki page that showcases the pinned research projects.

President Gabel concluded her remarks by telling members that the strategic plan is not intended to force a pivot in future planning, but is an attempt to capture the institution's current progress and add a few bold initiatives that are built in consultation with stakeholders to continue the progression.

Committee members asked for clarification on the intent behind the MNtersections commitment, specifically whether the goals will address only health, food, and the environment. President Gabel explained that those themes were listed because they came up most often in consultations with all system campuses, including the Twin Cities campus, as issues with unique depth in the state, but she cautioned that the intention is not to focus only on those topics. Committee members suggested the achievement gap be added, and President Gabel said that issue is raised often in her consultations.

Committee members asked if the plan is intended to be a plan for internal communication or external communication. President Gabel said both, but explained that it is likely more focused on communicating outward. She explained that the plan is the architecture written to help people understand what the University is about and where it is going, but should also help guide vice chancellors and deans when they are drafting future plans.

3. Office for Science and Technology Policy Request for Information on the American Research Environment

Olson then reminded members that an email was distributed to the committee in advance of the meeting that included an [Office for Science and Technology Policy Request for Information on the American Research Environment](#), and she asked Chris Cramer to provide committee members with some context for the request.

Cramer explained that U.S. Congress has been pushing on federal agencies to protect taxpayer dollars that are being spent on research, particularly the funding that generates intellectual property that can be or is exfiltrated by nefarious actors. In response, the agencies have attempted to put things in place in an ad hoc fashion, he explained. The efforts from the funding agencies have been uncoordinated, Cramer said, in part because it took two years for the Trump administration to appoint a director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, which is a department in the U.S. President's administration that coordinates between the federal agencies.

Cramer told members that the White House has now appointed Dr. Kelvin K. Droegemeier who assembled the National Science and Technology Council's (NSTC's) Joint Committee on the

Research Environment (JCORE). One of the goals of JCORE, Cramer said, is to harmonize the agencies and coordinate communications that explain what is expected of the agencies in terms of oversight, among other things. Towards this goal, JCORE has issued a broad request for information across a range of subjects, including security.

Cramer explained that he distributed the request for information (RFI) to SRC because there are some interesting questions to consider, including questions about the value of collaborative arrangements and how to do them appropriately, and he wanted the committee to be able to comment, if there is interest in doing so. He cautioned that OVPR has not yet decided whether to comment on the request as an institution, and said he expected that other large organizations such as the [Council on Governmental Relations \(COGR\)](#) and the [American Council on Education](#) will comment on behalf of a number of institutions. He told members that decision would likely be made soon, and that he planned to hear feedback from SRC before making a final decision.

4. MN-GEMS Update

April Coon, associate director, Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA), reminded members that the institution issued an RFP for grant management software in the 2018-19 academic year, and received 17 initial responses to the proposal. After reviewing the bids, Coon said, six respondents were identified for a second review and after brief online demos from each of the six vendors, two finalists were chosen for on campus demonstrations. The demonstrations, she explained, will be scheduled for a full two days; the first will be held January 6 and 7, and the second will be January 13 and 14, 2020. She told members that there will be a group of individuals scoring the demonstrations, including Carston Wagner from SRC, and the demonstrations will also be broadcast online. Coon told members that there will be an opportunity for faculty feedback after the demonstrations.

With no further business, Olson adjourned the meeting.

Bobbie Erichsen
University Senate Office