
The University Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Senate Research Committee (SRC)

October 4, 2021

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: University Senate Overview; Foreign Influence Update; Openness in Research; Committee Discussion: Innovation Impact; Committee Discussion: Future Goals of OVPR]

PRESENT: Rick Wagner (chair), Anna Bokun, Liam Chen, Murray Frank, John Freeman, Ole Gram, Jessica Gutknecht, Lisa Johnston, Boyd Kumher, Michael Oakes, Julie Olson, Nicole Pilman, David Roberts, Shashi Shekhar, Jayanthi Sasisekaran, Susannah Smith, Nathaniel Talledge, Dimitri Trifunac, Abdi Warfa, Pamela Webb

REGRETS: Courtney Aldrich, Gregory Cuomo, Noah Grode, Kristin Hogquist, Leslie Kennedy, Mohammad Saleem Bhat

OTHERS ATTENDING: Dan Gilchrist, Bri Keeney, Lisa Warren

Chair Rick Wagner welcomed the committee and the members introduced themselves.

1. University Senate Overview

Bobbie Erichsen, deputy director, University Senate Office, provided an overview of the SRC charge and the University Senate governance structure.

2. Foreign Influence Update

Pamela Webb, associate vice president for research, provided a [Foreign Influence Update](#), which included an overview of the new OVPR International Research Website, an update on current caseloads and legislative/executive orders, and key reminders from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

3. Openness in Research

Webb then provided a broad overview of [Openness in Research](#) including the role that the SRC plays in granting exceptions.

Julie Olson pointed out that the SRC does not meet in the summer, which can be detrimental when an exception is requested during those months. She asked how those instances should be handled. Webb explained that it is possible for the SRC to approve an exception via email, and encouraged that approach during months that the committee does not meet. Webb told members that as long as there is a majority vote, the committee could recommend to approve or deny.

3. Committee Discussion: Innovation Impact

Michael Oakes, vice president for research, explained that the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is working to build and strengthen collaboration with the University's research enterprise and external partners (i.e. corporations) and national labs. This approach was developed to align with the MNtersections commitment outlined in [MPact 2025](#).

In order to advance this work, Oakes said, OVPR has identified three areas for growth:

1. Corporate engagement
 - a. This will include standing up a corporate engagement office that focuses on relationship management and deepening connections with external partners. The new office will be directed by Steve Corkery, associate vice president of corporate and foundation relations, University of Minnesota Foundation.
2. Technology Commercialization
 - a. This office has already been established and is directed by Rick Huebsch, executive director, [Technology Commercialization](#). Additional focus will be made to bring innovative technologies to the workplace. This often includes working with start-up companies.
3. Strategic Partnerships and Research Collaborative (SPARC)
 - a. The SPARC team, led by Amy Kircher and Katey Pelican, co-directors, SPARC, focuses on working with faculty members to meet their needs when working with external partners, and helps to navigate corporate environments.

Oakes reported that in addition to growing these areas, OVPR is working with the Office of the President and the Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations to establish an [innovation corridor](#), which is a real estate development effort to bring start-up companies, agencies, and corporate partners in geographic proximity to one another by building physical spaces to foster collaboration and create marketable research that has a broad impact. (Note: Please see [Recommendations and Framework for University Innovative Corridor](#).)

The following new grants are also available to researchers, Oakes said:

- [Innovation Impact Case Award](#)
- [Social Justice Impact Grant](#)

Wagner asked whether there is support, financially and otherwise, from the Board of Regents on the new innovation corridor initiatives. Oakes explained that the innovation corridor project is part of operationalizing the MPact 2025 plan, and the board is supportive of the systemwide strategic plan. The BOR will likely discuss the real estate investments related to the innovation corridor, but the other growth opportunities are primarily realignments and reorganizations within OVPR.

4. Committee Discussion: Future Goals of OVPR

In addition to the work being done related to the innovation corridor, Oakes identified the following additional goals for OVPR:

1. The PEAK Initiative
 - a. This project is very important for research administration, and the department will be considering significant changes depending on the outcome and recommendations from the PEAK Initiative audit.
2. Foreign Influence
3. Response times for Special Projects Administration (SPA), Research Animal Resources (RAR), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
4. Compliance issues
 - a. Particularly sexual misconduct and bullying, which have been identified as priorities by the national funding agencies.
5. Elevating diversity of researchers and research administration

With no further business, Wagner adjourned the meeting.

Bobbie Erichsen
University Senate Office