

**MINUTES OF MEETING #5 (2009 - 2010) OF THE  
SENATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP POLICY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 AT 12:00PM - 1:30PM  
IN MC D350-L**

**PRESENT:** Professor Tamara El-Hoss (Chair), Ms. Tabasum Akseer, Professor Sandra Bosacki, Dr. Ian Brindle, Dean Rick Cheel, Ms. Margaret Grove, Dr. Murray Knuttila, Professor Tom O'Neill, Dean Marilyn Rose, Professor John Sivell, Professor Angus Smith, Ms. Judy Maiden (Recorder)

**REGRETS:** Professor Tansu Barker (Vice-Chair), Professor Cheri Bradish, Professor June Corman, Mr. Ryan Klamot, Professor Lynn Rempel (sabbatical), Professor John Menzies, Professor Vera Woloshyn

**GUEST:** Philip Thomas

**Introductions / Welcome**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**MOVED** (Brindle/Bosacki)

**THAT** the agenda be accepted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**MOVED** (Cheel /O'Neill)

**THAT** the minutes of the #4 (2009 - 2010) Senate Research & Scholarship Policy Committee held on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**3. Update/Information**

a. Sub-Committee reports from Chairs

i. TREMP

(El-Hoss)

Professor El-Hoss read the report submitted by Professor Corman, sub-committee chair by an email received on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Professor Corman mentioned she had not received the last draft of the Travel Policy. The report is detailed below.

*'I am called off campus on June 8th and I will not make the Research Meeting. The sub-committee on the travel and insurance policy has met twice. Our sub-committee recommends deliberations between the administration and BUFA prior to finalizing any policy that regulates university-related travel by faculty especially given that this policy changes the terms and conditions of work. Our sub-committee recognizes the important responsibility that faculty members assume when they travel with students -- either in a class setting or as research assistants. Faculty members request greater clarity about*

*their responsibilities and liabilities in these situations*'. June Corman, Chair of sub-committee on Travel Policy

Professors El-Hoss and Barker received a letter from the president and vice-president of BUFA on May 19<sup>th</sup> regarding BUFA's position *that no policy can be implemented that affects the terms and conditions of work without BUFA's approval and that BUFA is not entering into any changes to Brock University's Travel Policy until negotiations for our next contract commence*. This letter was sent in reference to Article 24 – Policy on Safety and Liability for Field Research in the Brock University Faculty Handbook (FHB) which contains an appendix that requests the Chair or Director, Dean and University OHS Officer to “approve” of a faculty members' field research. BUFA could not accept that a faculty member needs anyone's approval to conduct the research they choose to do and contend that the FHB is inconsistent with the provisions of the Collective Agreement. The main contention was with Appendix 2 of Article 24 which states, *“The field Research described previously is granted approval/recommended for approval”* - was that it must be signed by a Department Head (or equivalent) Dean and University OHS Officer.

BUFA asks that this appendix be changed and that any revised policy coming out of Associate Vice-President Finn's Office does not contain any level of approval for a faculty members' chosen research activity.

During discussion it was mentioned that this is a process and that the FHB will usually catch up to the Collective Agreement. Dr. Brindle said the issue is a complicated one since you can apply to a research agency and receive funds for research and if the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) says there is a problem with the travel you cannot go. DFAIT stopped travel to Mexico a few years ago with a warning because of the number of murders occurring there. Professor O'Neill expressed some concern about the legality of if a researcher goes somewhere at risk because he felt that if a researcher does research, assessing the risk is part of their job and that we have to assist people in assessing the risk rather than having approval.

Travelling to a country with a Travel Warning may impact the university's health insurance and/or trip cancellation insurance. It was questioned what rights a faculty member has to go to places at risk and why we have such a complicated policy since you cannot stop someone from doing their research. It is recognized that the University has to be protected from liability. For externally funded research the funder is concerned about the research occurring and it was asked what the funder's responsibility is regarding it. The case law may need to be checked in this matter. Also questioned was whether it is the universities insurance only or the funders that would cover the individuals travel.

If a faculty member has to travel to Iraq for their research and cannot do it here it was questioned what provisions there are for them to do their research. Ryerson University's sign off authority form signs off that they are aware of the risks and the dean signs off that the individual is aware of the dangers which protects the university. We ought to adopt a form as simple as Ryerson's.

The committee would like to see and review the final draft of the Travel Policy when it becomes available.

**ii. Budget**

**(O'Neill)**

No report

**iii. Centres and Institutes**

**(Smith)**

A document with new definitions was compiled by the sub-committee with the recommendation that there be four different bodies; Institutes, Schools, Centres, and Research Centres. There is uncertainty in what to do with this document now. The committee needs to approve the new definitions and begin to go forward from here and form policies around these definitions. Since the current committee is aware of these changes it should be left with them to continue to move forward next year. There is already a policy in existence FHB 25, which will need to be revised and sent to Senate for approval and possibly go to other Senate committees for input as well. It was mentioned that Nota Klentrou, Chair of Graduate Studies Committee would like to receive this updated list of definitions. It was stated that the revision of the policy will be an impossible task if we can not agree on nomenclature.

The sub-committee recognizes that the new definitions do not correspond to the current names of many existing entities and they endorse the principle of grandfathering these existing names, with the understanding that the possibility of changing the name will be considered at the time of next review.

Given the potential confusion of centres and research centres, the names of Research Centres will begin with "Centre for Research in..." which should help to distinguish the difference with centres. The name was changed from 'Units' as it was believed that the term 'unit' is neither descriptive nor desirable and because of this it is rarely used in the current definitions.

Schools are a proposed new type of collective body at Brock which are research-oriented and will offer programs of study like Centres, but they seek to be more high profile and endorsed as strategic like Institutes. They may have faculty appointed to them as Centres do, but Institutes do not.

Dean Cheel moved to send this item to Senate for the next meeting in September for Nomenclature.

**MOVED unanimously**

**iv. Intellectual Property**

**(El-Hoss)**

No report

Professor El-Hoss has agreed to chair the Senate Research committee again next year and would like a volunteer to chair the Intellectual Property Sub-committee in her place.

**b. Policy on Surveys**

**(El-Hoss)**

Professor Sivell wants it noted that near the beginning of the draft request form attached to the policy, there is this advice - *"While filling out this form, keep in mind the following criteria by which this request will largely be assessed:*

- o Alignment with institutional priorities.*
- o Design of the survey, including timing, scope, and mode of delivery.*
- o Extent to which other surveys supply (or could supply) the desired data.*
- o Extent of survey burden on target groups within the university.*
- o Government reporting requirements.*
- o Impact of survey and/or impact of previous surveys of this kind*

*If you are attaching additional information please be sure to clearly identify which item(s) are being addressing."*

He realizes that the (wise) intention is to indicate that the following list of points is not - in fact cannot be - totally inclusive, but the wording "will largely be assessed" vaguely seems to imply that there are other \*known\* factors that are for some reason not being disclosed. He would like to suggest that the same caveat could be expressed without that negative-sounding overtone via a wording along the lines of "... criteria will influence the assessment of your application". He wanted this opinion expressed and will contact Pat Beard to relay this information.

**ACTION** This policy is to be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the first meeting in the fall

**c. Tricouncil Monitoring Visit**

**(P. Thomas)**

*In the fall of 2009 NSERC and SSHRC began a financial monitoring review of Brock University for the 2008-09 fiscal year.*

*The review consisted primarily of an assessment of the administrative and financial control framework in place at Brock for the management of grant and award funds provided by the agencies. The responses to questionnaires completed by us on our management control system and practices were assessed, interviews were conducted with grant holders and, compliance testing of transactions from a sample of research grant fund accounts from the 2008-2009 fiscal year was performed.*

*The review identified weaknesses in the following areas:*

- Verification for compliance and eligibility with agency requirements*
- Authorization of expenditures by the grant holder*
- Hospitality expenditures*

- *Travel expenditures*
- *Salary expenditures*
- *Research grant funds transfer letter*

*The review also found that Brock's management control framework lacked key elements necessary to ensure the effective administration of grant funds, including the clear definition and communication of the roles and responsibilities of the operational staff involved in day-to-day oversight of research grant funds, the absence of ongoing training to staff in the review of compliance and eligibility of research grant fund expenditures, and periodic monitoring of the effectiveness management controls.*

*Due to these weaknesses the agencies concluded that Brock's management control framework for grant funds is unsatisfactory, and there will be another Monitoring Visit within two years to assess our response to these conclusions.*

*Brock must take immediate steps to address the recurring findings and report back to the agencies on their action plans. Joanne McKee, Rob Cargnelli and I have already begun the action plan. Some changes, the 'quick fixes' have been implemented, and Hannah Zhang and I and have presented the findings to Finance and Purchasing staff. Over the summer they will present similar sessions for all Administrative Assistants and Budget Officers. Getting the word out to the researchers, who are already facing more rejected expense claims, is a challenge they have not solved. The input and suggestions of the Senate Research Committee are welcome and appreciated.*

The report was not meant as an audit, but meant for comments and criticisms. The Tricouncil report was presented to Ian Brindle, Rob Cargnelli, Joanne McKee and Philip Thomas.

The last review was conducted in 2003 – 2004 and weaknesses were discovered and some have since been corrected. Accounts payable staff have been trained and are spotting more ineligible transactions and have been sending them back to the researchers. The HST is being redesigned to capture any researcher purposes such as who took the trip and the relationship to researcher. Researcher's signatures are required on everything. Hannah Zhang has the research expertise to look at travel related items and will conduct a review of these claims for a short period of time, so that people become educated on how to correctly fill in claims. It is important to educate faculty members, but to do so we have to get them to come to meetings and are unsure how to best inform them that we need to make changes in the current processes.

Dr. Knuttila feels it is serious enough to send out a letter regarding this issue as the consequences are fairly serious since we need to be compliant in two years time when we are reviewed again. The University of Calgary was in trouble recently when a story was leaked to the papers presenting their weaknesses. They told their researchers that their funding was in jeopardy by sending an email warning them that they could lose their research funding if they did not comply with the Tricouncil guidelines. The Tricouncil said they would not cut off their funding, but it is

uncertain what they would really do. Dr. Brindle thought a letter is a good suggestion and should be educational in value and talk about issues that need to be addressed without causing alarmism. Professor Smith felt we need to change the whole university culture thinking to inform all researchers what Tricouncil grant requirements are needed. An ORS Financial Workshop is held every year in the spring to go over the Tricouncil rules, but attendance is not mandatory. This is a weak link and we should do a better job of identifying researchers that have not received the training and for researchers that have not received funding in 2 or 3 years. It was suggested that new researchers be given an information update of what granting councils require through the VP Research. If ORS could find a way to monitor research accounts on an ongoing basis it would be useful. Mr. Thomas indicated that the Tricouncil requires a 'one up' signature from someone in an administrative position over the faculty member. What we want to do is indicate that who is signing does not have to know what is in an account, but can attest to the fact where faculty member is located. The Chair signature needs to be defined so that they know it does not mean anything in the way of monetary commitments. The Tricouncil wants more paper and more documentation. It is felt the need for accountability will get worse.

#### **4. Report from Vice-President Research**

**(Brindle)**

The reorganization of the Office of Research Services is underway with the addition of three new positions which were requested and have been granted. They are a Government Relations Officer, Office Manager and Business Development Officer. The office hopes to hire the Government Relations Officer first as this is an essential position because s/he will seek out and find new sources of funding from agencies, international and domestic, by developing effective relationships with the granting councils as well as provincial and federal departments. The university has not had a sizable CIDA grant in a long time and with the addition of this position it will help to facilitate access to non-traditional funding which in turn will help the university to obtain larger grants. It is hoped this person will be hired prior to the fall so they can focus on researchers submitting in the next granting cycle.

The Office Manager will help to eliminate duplication and effort within the Research Office. This person in conjunction with the ORS Team will develop and maintain effective and strategic plans for the operation of the various components of ORS. S/he will ensure ORS systems and procedures conform to funding agency compliance policies and procedures, supervise development and maintenance of the research database and its articulation with Brock's Institutional Analysis needs, develop and administer the ORS operating budget and provide the VPR with information and assistance on policy and procedures.

The Business Development Officer will be hired to bring business development more fully into the mission of Brock University. S/he will take intellectual property, and explore commercialization options for the benefit of faculty members involved and for the University. S/he will work with the Tech Transfer team and other members of ORS. S/he will work within guidelines of the Business incubator to secure funding for spin off companies developed based on internal IP. People are lining up at the moment with opportunities and we need to develop these to benefit the university and business. Recently a tech company offered to help Brock to develop a spin-off company which will to give us the in-house experience we need.

We hope to have these positions in place by summer and by fall we will have a better focus in the office so the Strategic Plan can then be developed.

We have had success with NSERC and SSHRC and we need to continue to enlarge the arena in which we operate. In the fall the VPR will report on office activities to fulfil this mandate.

#### **5. Other Business**

None

Date of Next Meeting:

End of September (TBD)

The above meetings will be held in the Research/Graduate Studies Boardroom (MC D350-L)

#### **6. Adjournment**

(Brindle/O'Neill)

**THAT** the meeting be adjourned.

**CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm