University Research Committee: Annual Report to the Faculty Senate:

Charge, Work Groups, and Accomplishments during the 2020-2021 Academic Year

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COMMITTEE CHARGE

The committee charge consists of four distinct areas:

1. <u>Conduct periodic surveys of Faculty</u> regarding the infrastructure, training, and services available to faculty for the conduct of research, scholarship, and creative activities;
2. <u>Recommend to the Provost and President suitable policies and standards</u> for University-level investments and initiatives pertaining to research, scholarship, and creative activities; Work with relevant members of the administration to develop ideas and plans to improve and increase research, scholarship, and creative activities across the University; and suggest paths forward through identified challenges;
3. Work with relevant members of Faculty and Administration to <u>develop Data Management infrastructure and policies</u>; and
4. <u>Act in liaison with appropriate committees</u>, including the Academic Quality Committee and the Faculty Development Committee.

Finally, the committee reports at least once a year to the Faculty Senate.

PROGRESS

In 2021, the committee organized into three Work Groups corresponding to the first three Charge areas. Accomplishments in Spring 2021 were as follows:

1. The **Survey Work Group** created and distributed an online survey on research, scholarship, and creative activity experiences at PSU. In an effort to avoid duplicate surveys, they worked closely with the Data Management Work Group and Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) to develop the survey. The survey was first shared with the entire committee, who offered feedback and tested the survey for technical issues. It was subsequently distributed to the entire Faculty, with over 500 total responses. The Work Group analyzed the data and provided a preliminary report; key results are presented here. RGS is in the process of conducting further analysis and will create a more detailed report over the summer. The Committee is reviewing the faculty survey results to determine whether there are any policy recommendations to make to the President and Provost related to research.
2. The **Data Management Work Group** is developing a "Research Data Guidebook" that will serve as a central reference point for data management related policies, procedures, and support. The process of creating such a resource is also a strategy for completing our charge: in consolidating existing data management related resources, the Subgroup will be better able to identify the infrastructure and policy gaps that need to be addressed. The process thus far has involved meeting with representatives in the Office of Information Technology, the University Library, and Research and Graduate Studies.

3. The **Administration Work Group** met with the Dean of the Graduate School, Rossitza Wooster, and the Interim VP of the Graduate School, Jason Podrabsky, to discuss issues such as creation of an Office of Undergraduate Research and approaches to creation of Certificates and other types of training.

Portland State University (PSU)
Faculty Survey of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities
(A joint project of the PSU Faculty Senate Research Committee and Research and Graduate Studies)
Preliminary Results
Prepared for June 7, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting

In order to avoid duplicate surveys going out to faculty, the University Research Committee collaborated with Research and Graduate Studies (RGS) to form a single survey. The survey link was distributed via the Faculty Senate's google group of all faculty on April 1, 2021. Between April 2nd and 13th, **530** responses were received. Survey development and analysis were conducted by the Faculty Survey Work Group of the University Research Committee.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics: The majority of respondents identified as male or female with **slightly more women than men** . Approximately **three-quarters respondents identified as white.** The next highest portion of respondents identified as Asian, followed by Hispanic or Latino, Black, African or African American, and American Indian or Alaska Native. No one identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, though some preferred not to say. Respondents ranged in age from their 20s to their 70s, falling mainly between the **ages of 35 to 64** with more clustered in the center of that range (age 45-54). Approximately **half reported having children at home or other caregiving** responsibilities.

PSU: Respondents were **predominantly from CLAS**, followed by the Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science, CUPA, and the Schools/Colleges of the Arts, Business, Education, Social Work, and Public Health. The Library, Honors College and other units were also represented. Almost half came from the **social sciences,** one-quarter from **the natural/physical sciences and engineering,** followed by **the humanities, arts and other fields**. Respondents **predominantly held the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor**, followed by adjunct professors, instructors/senior instructors, and research faculty. More than half had been at PSU for more than 10 years and almost three-quarters had an FTE of 1.0. **Approximately half were tenured. Almost one-third were not tenure track**.

MORE THAN 75% OF RESPONDENTS CONDUCTED RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, OR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Of the respondents who conducted research, scholarship, or creative activities, about **two-thirds worked on research and one-third on creative arts or humanities**. Of the time spent on those projects, about one quarter of it was taken up by administrative activities.

RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO PSU's EDUCATIONAL MISSION

Almost all respondents indicated that **research experience is moderately to extremely important in the general education of PSU students**. Of those who taught undergraduates, almost all reported incorporating their research, scholarship, or creative activities into their teaching at least once each term (half reported doing so at least weekly). Respondents indicated that their **research, scholarship, or creative activities provide (1) educational opportunities** for graduate, undergraduate, and even high school students, including for completing capstones, and master's projects or theses; **(2) student employment and financial aid**, including GRAs, stipends and tuition remissions; and **(3) faculty and staff compensation** (course buy-outs, soft money). Despite these contributions to PSU, more than half of respondents felt that research, scholarship and creative activities were **undervalued** by the university (compared to less than a fifth who felt undervalued by their department).

> *"I often feel as though PSU wants to have its cake and eat it too, in the sense that it*
> *really wants the prestige and funding that come from being a research institution, but it*
> *also really leverages discourses that I associate with teaching-focused institutions."*

DESIRE TO COLLABORATE ACROSS DEPARTMENTS IS HIGH, BUT BARRIERS EXIST

Respondents predominantly reported collaborating with (1) colleagues at higher ed institutions other than PSU, (2) students, and (3) colleagues in their own departments. Collaborations across PSU departments appear to occur at about half the rate of collaborations within departments. Respondents expressed strong interest in interdepartmental or interdisciplinary work with other faculty across PSU, but cited institutional barriers for doing so, including **fragmentation of departments** and the **lack of interdisciplinary frameworks**, such as like the former School of the Environment and the de-funded Portland Center for the Public Humanities. Some identified University Studies as a gateway for interdisciplinary programs that might integrate research, civic engagement, and undergraduate education even more comprehensively than the present arrangement.

OVER 50% OF RESPONDENTS WORK WITH <u>DATA</u> FOR RESEARCH OR ANALYSIS

About half of those who reported working with data had written protocols for <u>managing</u> data, including a **data management plan**, **data security plan,** or **data use agreement**. For some, the distinction between these documents and IRB protocols was unclear. Respondents <u>stored</u> their data primarily on a **PSU** office or lab computer, Google Drive or a Network drive. Respondents also saved data on their **personal computer or hard drive** and/or used **personal funds** to pay for at least part of their data storage. Few identified compliance standards and regulations that applied to their data, most commonly protections for human subjects' research (**IRB**), student records (**FERPA**), and health records (**HIPAA**). The majority of those who shared data did so mainly via email or data depositories such as **PDXScholar** or **Genebank**. At least one respondent used **Dropbox** to share data, which is discouraged by PSU due to its history of being hacked.

MOST <u>FUNDING SOURCES</u> ARE EXTERNAL

More than half responded that their research, scholarship, or creative activities were **most often financially supported by external grants or fellowships**, followed by internal (PSU or departmental) grants or fellowships and/or PSU IPDA funds. Almost one-third had used their own **personal funds** to finance at least some of their activities. Of those who submitted **external funding proposals**, approximately one-half submitted <u>all or most</u> of them through the Sponsored Projects Administration unit within Research and Graduate Studies (**SPA**), one-quarter <u>sometimes</u> submitted proposals though SPA, and one-quarter had <u>never</u> submitted their external proposals though SPA. Respondents appeared to have an **approximate acceptance rate of 50%** for proposals to conduct research, scholarship, or creative activities as a Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, collaborator, or equivalent. Funding applications or proposals for other types of work, such as planning grants, book writing, or artistic performances or screenings had success rates of less than 10%.

<u>COMMUNICATION</u> COULD BE ENHANCED

The majority of respondents felt that they **knew little about highlights and successes** of research, scholarship, and creative activities happening at PSU. Suggestions for spreading the word included putting research, scholarship and creative activities on the PSU homepage more often, press releases, up-to-date searchable webpages, a research vlog or video newsletter, and social media posts (including Linked-In). Over half of respondents were **unfamiliar with the University's Open Access Publication Policy**, and less than one-quarter had deposited their work in **PDXScholar**.

MORE <u>INTERNAL SUPPORTS</u> ARE NEEDED

A large portion of the respondents who reported needing help to develop <u>funded</u> or <u>unfunded</u> research, scholarship or creative activities also indicated that **the university did not help them at all** to do so. Many cited a lack of university funding to hire research support within SPA or individual departments as a barrier to submitting proposals for external funding. The majority of **those who did receive support, got it from SPA**. Development support was also provided to a lesser extent by: (1) partners at other universities or organizations; (2) faculty, chairs or classified staff in the respondent's department; (3) faculty in other departments; (4) the PSU Foundation; (5) PSU Innovation and Intellectual Property (IIP); and (6) consultants hired by individual departments. Some respondents reported using their **personal funds** to pay for consultants and assistants external to PSU to help them develop and submit proposals.

When provided with a list of **potential university supports** for helping to grow or develop their work, potentially building it into a larger project, the ones most often identified as helpful or very helpful were: **(1) departmental funds** to cover a percent of a respondent's FTE, **(2) an increase in IPDA** (Professional Development) funds, **(3) funded course buy-outs**, and **(4) an overall reduction in course load / teaching responsibilities**. Other identified supports appeared to be less important for the respondent pool as a whole, but could have more importance for specific subgroups of respondents, such as non-tenure track faculty or teaching faculty. These supports included **funded GRAs and GTAs, sabbaticals for pre-tenure or non-tenure track faculty, and an increase in the number of advisors** to relieve faculty from that responsibility, among others.

> *"…spending typically two plus days on the 40-hour work week on admin and university service means doing scholarship in overtime. We need more administrative staff in departments to support work of curriculum committees, grad admissions, etc."*

<u>NEXT STEPS:</u> A more in-depth analysis of the survey responses is currently being conducted by RGS.