

Scholarship, Research and Creative Thought Committee
Second Meeting, November 7, 2014
Minutes (subject to approval by Committee)

The Strategic Scholarship, Research and Creative Thought Committee held its second committee meeting on Friday, November 7, 2014. Attending: Candace Vance, Jason Jagers, Nicole Hand-Bryant, John Roark, Jacqueline Hansen, Steve Cobb, Daniel Johnson, Terry Derting, Iin Handayani, and Murphy Smith (Chair). Unable to attend: Howard Whiteman. Also attending were Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee, Tim Todd and Bob Jackson.

The meeting was held in the Accounting Department Conference Room, First Floor, Business Building; and began at 2:00 pm.

The meeting agenda was as follows:

1. Discuss emails/feedback received (previously emailed or discussed with committee member)
 - a. Anonymous - Decline in grant funding; a dean's handling of a college's definition of research.
 - b. COB Professor - Justifying our existence; assessment interfering with learning process.
 - c. Verbal feedback from Nichole's three colleagues (anonymous)
2. Develop 4 to 6 measurable goals (tentative) based on:
 - a. input from Town Hall meeting
 - b. survey results
 - c. discussions with colleagues
3. Discuss additions/revisions to PowerPoint file and/or survey questionnaire for next Town Hall meeting.
4. Review/discuss upcoming meeting dates/times (Town Hall and Research Committee).

Regarding the decline in grant funding (1a), there were several possible reasons given for the grant funding decline e.g. economy, John Roark's position open for 14 months, lack of university's emphasis on research, lag in fact book, timing of when grants are awarded vs. money spent, and university culture. Steve Cobb observed that that research and grants are two separate things:

- Grants are important, but they aren't always necessary for research and creative work to occur. Research can often be conducted without grant money.
- Declining money available is real - Raise the bar for activity and recognize that writing, submitting, and responding takes time and is a necessary part of winning grants.

Sponsored research office, when staffed, is helpful for faculty in garnering grant money.

Restrictive policies and procedures regarding spending of grant funds discourages faculty from applying for grants again. How can this process be simplified?

Regarding the definition of research (1a), the question raised was how research should be measured for tenured vs. untenured faculty? The consensus was that administrators should

follow the university faculty handbook. While individual colleges can set their own policies, they can be no less stringent than what is in the faculty handbook.

A question was raised regarding scholarship: What do we do that separates us from the community college?

Regarding the COB Professor's concerns (1b), justifying our existence and assessment interfering with learning process, there was extensive discussion. For assessment, some committee members indicated that they were involved in developing assessment approaches that would not be overbearing.

Regarding verbal feedback from Nichole's three anonymous colleagues (1c), each item was discussed. Some specifics:

- The committee is open to all input, including via the Town Hall meeting; via the survey; via the MSU webpage; via Nichole; via a future Town Hall meeting; or directly to Murphy or anyone on the committee. Whatever ideas are submitted, our committee will seriously consider them.
- According to the survey results, 24 of 29 respondents agree or strongly agree that merit pay is an appropriate reward for notable research accomplishment (average response 4.5 out of 5; 5 = strongly agree). There are many factors beyond our control that will determine if there is any pay raise, big or small, and whether a merit pay raise is even possible.
- Regarding "evangelical undertones," the committee is unaware of what specifically offended the attendee. In any case, the U.S. Constitution provides citizens with freedom of speech and religious expression, including citizens who work for public universities. We are fully confident that nothing unconstitutional happened at our meeting.
- The committee is charged with identifying aspirational goals, but not charged with implementing these goals.
- Deciding on increases in the university budget, including re-allocations to better- or worse-performing colleges is beyond the scope of this committee.
- For the person who doesn't like "30,000 feet," we accept that he/she doesn't need a "grand view" before starting talking about changes at Murray State. However, not all faculty members have been other places and/or have a grand view, and certainly not all faculty members at Murray State have the same "grand view." In any event, at this time we are taking the "30,000 feet" perspective. More detailed perspective might be considered in the future.

Discussion turned to Agenda Item 2: Develop 4 to 6 measurable goals (tentative). Feedback received was discussed, including input from Town Hall meeting, survey results, and discussions with colleagues.

A suggestion was made that a reduced course load (e.g. 3/3 for faculty in colleges that currently require 4/4) may be an option for faculty who are involved in a grant on a two- or three-year agreement, subject to renewal based on research performance. This might mean that while some faculty members are shifted to a greater research role, others would be shifted to a greater teaching role, based on faculty preferences. Full transparency would be essential and all work would be valued based on the agreements made. Science & Engineering spoke about the possibility of piloting a model for this. (Cobb, Derting, and Johnson.)

There was discussion of how to format the next town hall meeting, including ways to encourage greater participation and the best day/time for the meeting. Jackie will develop a “carousel” session to be included in the Town Hall meeting.

The discussion for developing four to six measurable goals included the following points:

- What’s the vision for graduate students on campus? Depends on the college. Do we want one of our goals to be increase assistantships? Undergraduate, graduate, doctoral. Increase support for assistantships for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral. There’s multiple ways to achieve the goal. Several departments don’t have graduate students.
- Jackie agreed to send out email with tentative goals and use “reply-all” to hammer out wording.
- Nichole will send out a Doodle Poll to help set time for next meeting.
- Steve indicated that the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology would provide light refreshment for next Town Hall meeting in January

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.