Faculty Research Support and Facilities Advisory Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The committee met several times over the year, which resulted in much discussion and productive outcomes:

- Graduate student reimbursement policy: students supported by the graduate school attending conferences were offered scholarships (taxable) as opposed to expense reimbursement (nontaxable); after discussion with Dean Cook the policy was changed for the betterment of the students.
- Dean Cook and Vice Provost for Research Diane Souvaine discussed the Indirect Cost assessment and return. The ICR Federal Rate is 56% (typically 26% administrative and 30% facilities). The committee proposed and it was agreed upon that A&S faculty would receive the same return of ICR 5% as the SOE in 2017, excluding foundation grants unless charged at 56%. Monies would be transferred into faculty research accounts. Lois Stanley, Director of Campus Planning, discussed the SEC building. The SEC Building has been in the works for ~ 5 years, with the architect onboard 2.5 years ago. Construction in progress, with an expected completion date for Phase 1 of mid-December and occupancy Fall 2017.
- Much discussion ensued regarding instruments and core lab locations in the SEC. It is our understanding instruments, when purchased, will be selected on affordable rather than immediate need. The committee requested SEC planning group to reconsider decision and conduct a survey of the STEM departments to identify high priority instrument needs.
- SEC occupancy was at the time of our meeting still a work in progress. The committee also discussed the need for social spaces as they act as study and meeting areas for students.
- Robinson Hall will be gutted and consist mostly of office space.
- The plan for Barnum is unresolved; nonetheless, all occupants are expected to move when phase 1 of SEC is completed.
- The Committee met with OVPR administrators to discuss the so-called 5-day rule, which requires faculty to submit proposals 5-days before deadline. Faculty expressed frustration with the rule, especially because it was seen to work one-way: faculty who get applications to administrators ahead of time have no guarantee that the application will be reviewed by OVPR in a timely manner – in some cases requests for faculty to make changes or additions and submission of the proposal occurred last minute, causing undue stress for faculty. Retention of local and central research administrators, and especially post-award support, which is non-existent in many departments were other areas needing improvement. Both faculty and OVPR agreed SOE needs 4 staff and A&S an additional 3 staff.