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Amendment to Operating Guidelines for the Faculty Research Committee

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Approved by the Senate: 4/26/2005

Not Approved by the Senate:

Approved by the President: 6/23/2005

Not Approved by the President:

Amendment to Operating Guidelines for the Faculty Research Committee

Submitted by Trent Maurer

3/10/2005

Motion:

Being that the research grant competition that the Faculty Research Committee oversees is intended as a source of research funding for all scholars at Georgia Southern University;

Being that this competition is the only major source of internal funding/seed money available to all faculty for research;

Being that participation incentives are crucial to many research projects at this university, especially in the human sciences, and that the samples that are required for this research are frequently difficult or impossible to recruit without incentives or remuneration;

Being that such research with difficult to recruit populations is considered valuable by the University;

Be it resolved that the Faculty Research Committee be required to:

1. Give full consideration to participation incentives as a legitimate item for funding request in the Research Grant Competition;
2. Solicit additional information from the applicant and allow the applicant to provide a counter-argument before making a decision to disallow funding for participation incentives in cases where such incentives are required to secure acceptable participation rates (when so indicated by the applicant);

3. Establish a procedure by which applicants who are awarded partial funding may appeal budgetary items that have been disallowed.

Rationale:

The campus Research Grant Competition is supposed to be open for applications by all scholars at GSU. However, the committee has routinely disallowed a very specific category of funding: participation incentives. These incentives are disproportionately required by many programs of research in the human sciences. Refusal to award funding for participation incentives thus creates a de facto bias against such human subjects research, much in the same way that refusal to award funding for scientific equipment could create a bias against research in the hard sciences. If the grant is supposed to be open to all, the committee should not be allowed to discriminate against particular lines of research simply because the types of costs required for that research are different.

Response:

4-25-05: I am pleased to report that the Senate recommends approval of the motion below presented by Senator Michael Moore on behalf of Dr. Trent Maurer at the April 25, 2005, Faculty Senate meeting.

Trent Maurer submitted an agenda request to amend the operating guidelines for the Faculty Research Committee. This item was approved by the SEC for inclusion in the Senate meeting. Motion from Senator Michael Moore on behalf of Trent Maurer (CHHS) Amendment to Operating Guidelines for the Faculty Research Committee

Michael Moore (COE) made the following motion on behalf of Trent Maurer (CHHS).

“Being that the research grant competition that the Faculty Research Committee oversees is intended as a source of research funding for all scholars at Georgia Southern University; Being that this competition is the only major source of internal funding/seed money available to all faculty for research; Being that participation incentives are crucial to many research projects at this university, especially in the human sciences, and that the

samples that are required for this research are frequently difficult or impossible to recruit without incentives or remuneration; Being that such research with difficult to recruit populations is considered valuable by the University; Be it resolved that the Faculty Research Committee be required to: 1. Give full consideration to participation incentives as a legitimate item for funding request in the Research Grant Competition; 2. Solicit additional information from the applicant and allow the applicant to provide a counter-argument before making a decision to disallow funding for participation incentives in cases where such incentives are required to secure acceptable participation rates (when so indicated by the applicant); 3. Establish a procedure by which applicants who are awarded partial funding may appeal budgetary items that have been disallowed.”

Moore noted that the rationale for the motion is:

“The campus Research Grant Competition is supposed to be open for applications by all scholars at GSU. However, the committee has routinely disallowed a very specific category of funding: participation incentives. These incentives are disproportionately required by many programs of research in the human sciences. Refusal to award funding for participation incentives thus creates a de facto bias against such human subjects’ research, much in the same way that refusal to award funding for scientific equipment could create a bias against research in the hard sciences. If the grant is supposed to be open to all, the committee should not be allowed to discriminate against particular lines of research simply because the types of costs required for that research are different.”

Mike Moore deferred to Trent Maurer from the gallery. Maurer stated that performance incentives (money paid to people to be subjects in research) were specifically disallowed as a funding line item by the Faculty Research Committee. Maurer noted that some types of research depended on these incentives to ensure that enough people would participate in the study.

Pat Humphrey (COST) asked Maurer whether these incentives were specifically disallowed by the Research Committee. Maurer responded by quoting the letter he received from the Committee stating that this was the case.

Mike Nielsen worried that there would be logistical problems associated with the proposed appeals process contained in the motion. Nielsen asked David

Alley (CLASS and Chair of the Faculty Research Committee) to comment on this issue.

David Alley responded first by stating the responsibilities of the Faculty Research Committee. He said these were

1. To review and evaluate faculty research.
2. Allocate funds budgeted to the committee for distribution.
3. Recommend policies and procedures for the promotion and support of faculty research.

He said that item three was relevant here and that the policy of not funding such items stemmed from members of the Research Committee who questioned the reliability and validity of such research efforts. He also noted that there were logistical problems associated with the appeals process. Alley noted that it was much more effective to simply revise the proposal and reapply in the next funding cycle. Alley also stated that it was a slippery slope for the Senate to micromanage the inner workings of the Research Committee. Alley also stated that it was not possible to develop a static set of guidelines about which things would or would not be funded from year to year.

Ming Fang He (COE) worried that the appeals process would place too large a burden on the Committee. Annette Laing (CLASS) wondered at the inability of the Committee to produce guidelines. Laing also asked Alley how many proposals were received by the Committee and how many were funded. Alley replied that fifteen proposals were received but he did not know how many were funded.

Mike Moore (COE) noted that this information was contained in the Librarian's Report. There were 15 proposals requesting a total of \$101,590.57 of which 11 were either totally or partially funded and that a total of \$55,742.37 was awarded. Virginia Richards (CHHS) called upon Trent Maurer to explain the impact of not funding the participation money on his research effort. Maurer explained that not receiving this funding gutted the entire proposed project and that he would not have bothered applying if he had known that such money would not be funded.

Candy Schille (CLASS) moved to end the debate. The motion was seconded and carried by voice vote. Rice Jenkins then asked the Senate to vote on the Maurer motion. The motion carried by hand count.

President's Response:

6-23-2005: Dr. Grube: Following review of the recommendation of the above reference motion adopted by the Faculty Senate at the April 25, 2005, meeting, as provided in Dr. Rice Jenkins' memo of April 27, 2005, I have approved the motion presented by Dr. Michael Moore on behalf of Dr. Trent Maurer.