

REPORT OF THE FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE 1999-2000

This report gives a synopsis of this year's activities of the Faculty Research Committee (FRC). The committee budget for this year was \$700,000 (with \$19,500 being a one-time rollover of unspent monies from the 1998-1999 allocation) and was divided among Faculty Research Assignments (FRAs) and Summer Research Grants (SRGs). Our recommendations were based on \$15,000 for each FRA and \$5,000 for each SRG. The minor grants ranged from \$141 to \$440, totaling \$20,000 for both semesters' rounds of competition.

The Chair of the Faculty Research Committee spoke at the Orientation for New Faculty regarding research support on campus. She explained the nature of the available programs, evaluation deadlines, and the process of the FRC. Among the topics discussed was the FRC's commitment to ensure a ??level playing field's by requiring full compliance with application procedures and deadlines as a prerequisite to consideration of a request for funding.

One of the first responsibilities of the Faculty Research Committee was to review the NEH summer stipend proposals on campus, which was completed on a timely basis to facilitate preparation and transmittal processes to the NEH. These generally range from 4 to 8 applications a year. This year we received 5 applications, from which we are permitted to make two nominations. The nominees were informed on September 20, 1999.

Two applications for subvention of publications were received; the Provost accepted the endorsement of the Committee and extended the subvention on the first submission, while the second submission is still under consideration by the Provost's Office. The evaluation process involves reading of the manuscript and application materials, or listening to the work product, in such areas as music, as well as recommending the level of funding.

This year there were 37 applications for Faculty Research Assignments. We recommended funding 29 of the proposals. These FRA awards claimed \$435,000 of the budget (calculated as the sum of 29 proposals each at \$15,000). There were 69 applications for Summer Research Grants, and we recommended funding 53 of the proposals (53 @ \$5,000=\$265,000). We provided a wait list, in rank order of 5 summer grant proposals.

Year (Budget for FRA and SRG applications)	FRA Applications	FRA Awards	SRG Applications	SRG Awards
1999-2000 (\$700,000)	37 6 applications under 7 years 16 with 7 years rest from 7.5 to 21 years (1 withdrawn)	29 (78%)	69	53 (77%)
1998-99 (\$656,500)	45 7 applications under 7 years 21 with 7 years rest from 8 to 23 years (1 withdrawn)	32 (71%)	62	36 (58%)
1997-98 (\$618,000)	39	26 (67%)	81	47 (58%)
1996-97 (\$618,000)	37	24 (65%)	68	48 (70.5%)
1995-96 (\$694,200)	35	28 (80%)	93	52 (56%)
1994-95	35	30 (86%)	80	47 (59%)
1993-94	41	25 (61%)	109	50 (46%)

Year (Budget for FRA and SRG applications)	FRA Applications	FRA Awards	SRG Applications	SRG Awards
1992-93	36	29 (81%)	89	62 (70%)
1991-92	39	30 (77%)	78	54 (69%)

The Faculty Research Committee worked with the Provost's Office to facilitate timely communications with applicants. Specifically, the FRC passed along its decisions to the Provost on November 8, 1999, who, in turn, expeditiously communicated with all applicants.

We arrived at our decisions by the following procedure. First, we discussed which FRAs were fundable, in accordance with the published guidelines. This year unfundable applications were due to missing or incomplete proposals or proposals which exceeded maximum length. In the past, the omission of a resume likewise made an application ineligible for funding. All applications must fully comply with published guidelines. This means that each applicant should exercise quality control and review the final submission to the Grants Office to ensure against any inadvertent omission or error in duplication. The applicant will be ineligible if any omissions or variations from published guidelines are identified by the FRC. After considering the FRA applications from those with seven or more years of eligibility, the remaining proposals were simultaneously evaluated with the SRG requests. Judgment on the merits of the proposals, in tandem with productivity assessments, provide a basis for evaluating which applications are funded. We encourage the faculty to read through the policies and principles of the Faculty Research Committee for each program, available on the web at <http://www.wm.edu/grants/WMGRANTS> as they provide further details on the approach to evaluation.

There were 58 entries in the Fall semester minor grant competition, of which 32 were funded (55%), for a total of \$11,944, in amounts ranging from \$205 to \$440. In the Spring, there were 69 applicants, of which 24 were funded (35%), for a total of \$8,056, in amounts ranging from \$141 to \$415. For comparison, in 1995-96, there were 71 entries in the Fall, 24 of which were funded (34%) and 39 entries in the Spring, of which 26 were funded (67%). The budget was \$15,000. Historically, the minor applications in the Spring number about 50. The amounts awarded ranged from \$150 to \$500 in 1997-1998, which experienced 51 entries in the Fall, with 26 funded (51%), and 44 in the Spring with 16 funded (36.4%)--associated with a \$15,500 total budget. The amounts awarded ranged from \$200 to \$500 in 1998-1999, which experienced 52 entries in the fall, with 31 funded (60%) for a total of \$12,260 and 40 in the spring with 28 funded (70%) for a total of \$10,490—associated with a \$22,750 total budget.

The committee urges all applicants for FRA, SRG, and Minor Grants to read the revised guidelines carefully for 2000-2001. Note that a publication Subvention Application form, available from the Grants Office, must be completed for consideration; requests for subventions can be submitted at any point in time throughout the year.

POLICY AREAS RESEARCHED, DISCUSSED, AND DECIDED UPON IN 1999-2000

In the interest of sharing information, the Committee is including in its report certain information received as input in its deliberations regarding policies of the Faculty Research Committee. Specifically, the FRC has been exploring the demographics of the faculty as a means of gaining a better understanding of the level of competition for FRAs both currently and in future years. Specifically, we requested information showing the number of tenure-track faculty with one, two, three, four, five, six, and seven years of track experience per academic year. This information is not available in the College’s administrative databases. What has been provided is reflected below: a table of expected tenure dates for tenure track faculty through the year 2005. These data come from the Provost's faculty database. Please note, tenure-track faculty may request and be granted an early decision before the expected tenure date.

Expected Tenure Dates for Tenure-Track Faculty						
Expected Tenure Date	Arts & Sciences	Business	Education	Law	Marine Science	Total
(Fall)						
2000*	14	0	0	2	1	17
2001	12	0	2	0	0	14
2002	13	1	3	0	0	17
2003	13	3	2	0	3	21
2004	17	1	1	0	0	19
2005	10	2	1	0	0	13
Total	79	7	9	2	4	101

* Denied tenure cases have been removed from the fall 2000 group.

If one considers the number of FRA Applications in recent years have included 12 faculty members requesting their first FRA, the influx of new applicants by 2003 can be expected to double, suggesting increasing pressure on available funds. The committee as a whole recommends

that funding should be accessible for service years below 7 years, which would increase the demands further. While the statistics in the table are subject to other effects, it seems clear that in the near future the resources currently allocated to the research program will not suffice to allow either first-time recipients or repeat holders to obtain a FRA with seven years of service—the minimum number of years needed will have to be raised indirectly through decisions within the resource constraints of the Faculty Research Committee's budget. Before 1994-1995 the minimum number of years of service needed for more than a remote chance at funding was six. Hence, we recommend that every effort be made to return to a setting where quality proposals of productive candidates with fewer than seven years of service will have a reasonable probability of receiving funding. We believe this result would be in concert with the opinions expressed in the Faculty Survey 1999-2000 (e.g., Table C.1 of the Final Report prepared by Elmer Schaefer (School of Law) and Katherine Kulick (Arts & Sciences), March 28, 2000). In addition to a desire to make grants meaningfully accessible for applicants with fewer than seven years of service, varying perspectives exist as to what ought to be the definition of service for the FRA program.

The current wording regarding service credits provides that:

"Leaves not funded by the College will be counted in determining the number of service years only if they were for purposes of teaching or research."

The sentence is intended to say, "if a leave that is not funded by the College is taken for the purpose of teaching or research, that year (or semester or whatever) will count towards the number of service years." In other words, family care leave or leave without pay for business or personal reasons will not count towards accumulating the required number of service years, but research leaves from outside agencies and, say, exchange teaching at another university will count.

The Faculty Research Committee has decided that the REU program participation should be permitted in the summer, alongside the summer research program, since it is dedicated to research, involves a stipend that is an estimated amount of about \$1,800, and is not seen to be infringing on the faculty member's commitment to the summer research grant funded in that same period. Involvement in this particular program has explicit advance approval for faculty to participate in tandem with our summer research grants.

The language of the policies and procedures for summer grants has been adjusted to reflect this change and can be found on the Web site of the Grants Office. Note: be certain to download the latest application when making submissions for FRAs, summer grants, minor grants, and subventions. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate form and that the submission is complete and complies with the guidelines.

As we trust is evidenced in this report, we strongly recommend an increase in the budget for the Faculty Research Committee. We are aware of an added consideration that is being discussed, relating to the amount of funding returned to the department of the FRA recipient. As many are aware, a static \$15,000 has been accorded per FRA for many years. We understand that additional sums are being encouraged, since it is very difficult for many areas to meet teaching

demands with the current level of available funding. We support the idea of expanding the budget for such purposes; however, we believe it is extremely important that our budget not merely be split into fewer FRAs denominated in larger dollar allocations to the home departments, as that would worsen both current and anticipated funding constraints. Hence, we urge that any addition to the budget that is tied to the amount allocated per FRA be above and beyond the amount essential to maintain and increase the number of FRAs and Summer Grants awarded annually. We also would point out that due to past years' funding constraints, the Faculty Research Committee reduced the summer stipends to \$5,000. We would like future committees to have the capability of considering increases to that stipend, from time to time, without having to decrease the number of SRGs or to encroach on the funding for FRAs. We respectfully request that future budget decisions consider the very real need for an increased allocation to the Faculty Research Committee.