

Tennessee Tech University  
--- Office of Research and Economic Development ---

*Minutes of the Meeting of*  
University Research Advisory Committee

The University Research Advisory Committee met at 1:00 pm Thursday, October 14, via TEAMS, with Dr. Jeff Boles presiding.

Members Present: Dr. Jeff Boles, Dr. Jeremy Blair, Ms. Julie Brewer, Dr. George Chitiyo, Dr. Kristen Deiter, Dr. Ferdinand DiFurio, Dr. Adam Holley, Dr. Shelia Hurley, Dr. Alfred Kalyanapu for Dr. Tania Datta, Dr. Brian Leckie, Ms. Gail Ligon, Dr. Satish Mahajan, Dr. Hayden Mattingly, Dr. Rory Roberts, Dr. Terry Saltsman, Dr. Mark Stephens, Mr. Elijah Tidwell, Ms. Megan Wharton, and Ms. Emily Wheeler

Members Absent: Mr. Greg Holt and Dr. Jennifer Taylor

Others Present: Dr. Amanda Powell and Ms. Sandra Storie

**1. Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2021**

The minutes from the April 15, 2021 meeting were reviewed with a motion to approve by Dr. Mahajan and a second by Mr. Tidwell. Motion carried.

**2. Creation of New Officer Position | Chair-Elect**

Dr. Boles reviewed the purpose of the University Research Advisory Committee. URAC is an advisory committee, with a focus on making recommendations to President Oldham and Dr. Taylor to help grow research at Tennessee Tech. Dr. Boles reviewed URAC Procedures. Last academic year, the committee discussed amending these procedures to create the position of Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect would work alongside the URAC Committee Chair in order to ensure continuing leadership and effective operation of the committee.

Dr. Boles asked for a volunteer to poll members to assess interest in the role of Chair-Elect. Dr. Mahajan volunteered to serve in this capacity. Dr. Boles will work on updating the URAC Procedures to include the Chair-Elect as an officer position so that the proposed changes can be reviewed during the November meeting.

**3. URAC Summer Subcommittee Draft Recommendation re: Faculty Research Committee Grants Program**

Dr. Boles, Dr. Holley, and Dr. Hurley served on a subcommittee over the summer months to review the Faculty Research Committee Grants Program at TTU. The major source of funding that the Office of Research has at its disposal are indirect costs. A large portion of indirect cost funding supports the Faculty Research Committee Grants Program.

Dr. Boles reviewed a recommendation written by the subcommittee, requesting approval by the full URAC committee. If approved, Dr. Boles will submit the recommendation to President Oldham. The committee discussed the document, with additional wording added to Item 3 recommending that any

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rubric used by the Faculty Research Grant Committee be provided on the committee website in advance of proposal submissions. Mr. Tidwell made a motion to approve the updated recommendation document. Dr. Hurley seconded. Motion carried. A copy of the final recommendation document is included as an attachment to these minutes.

**4. Legislative Update | Dr. Saltsman**

Dr. Saltsman gave an update on external funding via the legislative process. An appropriations budget is expected to be released soon by the Senate, which will provide a starting point to work toward future funding. The university is working on identifying equipment needs. Also, Tennessee Tech is requesting funding for a second engineering building.

**5. Adjournment**

Dr. Mahajan made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Mr. Tidwell. Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Storie, Committee Support Personnel

Attachment: Recommendation Letter to President Oldham re: Faculty Research Committee Grants Program

Date approved by committee: 11/18/2021



**Department of Chemistry**  
**TENNESSEE TECH**

To: President Philip Oldham

From: Jeffrey O. Boles, Chair, University Research Advisory Committee 

Date: October 14, 2021

President Oldham,

The University Research Advisory Committee (URAC) asks that you consider the following three recommendations. Over time, we believe these actions will substantively amplify the effectiveness of the Faculty Research Grant program by ensuring a unified strategic vision, by providing a quantitative means for the assessment of that strategy, and by adding a feedback mechanism to help faculty hone their ideas. The URAC feels these recommendations will allow the Faculty Research Grant program to better leverage TTU's internal resources as part of our drive to increase overall research output and communicate the impact of the funded projects to the entire TTU community:

1. Create a permanent subcommittee of the Faculty Research Committee whose charge will be to create, and then update quarterly, a database accessible by members of the TTU community that quantifies the two-year outcome of each Faculty Research Grant award, e.g. the number of publications/creative works, number of students involved, total external funding requests submitted, status of external funding requests, and total external funding received directly related to the funded project. This evaluation will assess the quality and impact of the funded programs, help make future grant decisions by the committee and demonstrate accountability of the funded faculty.
2. Assign responsibility for determination of funding priorities for Faculty Research Grants (e.g. distribution of awards between early career and senior

faculty, between individual and collaborative proposals) to the Vice President for Research.

3. Require that as part of their evaluation of Faculty Research Grant proposals, the Faculty Research Committee provide feedback to each faculty member who submits a Faculty Research Grant. If a rubric or evaluation criteria is utilized to rate and rank submissions, it should be provided on the committee website in advance of submissions each year.