

## **MINUTES**

### **Commission on Research**

**May 8, 2025**

**3:30-5:00pm**

**Zoom**

**Present:** Nicole Pitterson (presiding), Gibran Ali, Thomas Archibald, Ella Atkins, Thomas Bell, Leanna Blevins, Esra Buyuktahtakin Toy, Alberto Cano, Rebecca Cockrum, Joseph Gaeddert, Ben Knapp, Andrew Krum, Barry Miller, Laurel Miner (for Dan Sui), Albert Pan, Esther Park, Daniel Pauly, Jonathan Petters, Karen Schnatterly, Michelle Theus, Quinn Thomas, Janell Watson, Caitlin Woodson

**Absent with Notice:** Randy Heflin

**Absent:** Manish Basal, Ron Gibbons, Dan Givens, Jorge Reyes, Elizabeth Sicking, Sophie Thompson

**Guests:** Melinda West

**Research and Innovation Support:** Kim Borkowski

Nicole Pitterson called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm. A quorum was present.

### **1. Adoption of Agenda**

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

### **2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of April 10, 2025**

Nicole Pitterson noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be accessed on the [Commission on Research Sharepoint](#).

### **3. Other Items**

Laurel Miner gave an update on the current federal landscape. Notably, there continues to be pressure on Facilities and Administrative (indirect) costs, as seen through actions from the NIH, DOE, and most recently NSF proposing a cap of 15%. These changes would have a substantial impact on the Virginia Tech budget. There is a national effort led by groups like the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) to explore a new model for F&A; while a 15% capped rate is unlikely to be the final outcome of these conversations, a change to F&A models is likely. Also, the President released his “skinny budget”, a high level budget, which proposes cuts that would impact higher education, including sponsored research. Since this is only the first step of the annual budget process, a more comprehensive request is expected to be released in the next month, which will then be followed by appropriations actions in Congress. With regards to sponsored project terminations, on that date the university had 55. In all cases, we are exploring whether we can appeal the termination decision; however, each situation is different. Finally, Laurel noted that university leaders are having on-going discussions and going through different scenario exercises to help inform decisions on how the university will move forward with F&A, budget, and terminations. The floor opened for questions and further discussion. Some members stressed the importance of information

sharing within the university and with other institutions in the Commonwealth; as well as advocating the importance of federally funded research.

Laurel Miner gave an update on Virginia Tech Global Distinction. The steering committee was charged by Provost Clarke in January 2024 to identify and make recommendations on strategies and tactics to advance Virginia Tech's reputation - looking at how best to invest in programs, new ways of thinking to empower faculty and better impact research and creative and scholarly activities. Phase I process of the charge was completed in May 2024. Phase II began in October 2024 to focus on four main efforts: establish a mission statement for the effort, support emerging talent, align research investment mechanisms, reputational excellence and networking. The committee delivered a draft report to the Provost on May 1, 2025 for comments before being shared more broadly. The committee described Global Distinction as "Virginia Tech Global Distinction is the university's commitment to empowering impactful research, scholarship, and creative activity." The new University Mission Initiative on graduate students will inform the talent component of the Global Distinction strategy. Other recommendations of the committee included targeted year-round marketing, expanded central support for sponsored programs, and faculty recruitment and retention.

Nicole Pitterson notified the commission that COR Resolution 2024-25A - Resolution to Clarify Eligibility for Postdoctoral Associate Status, was approved by the University Council at their May 5 Meeting and it is now in the queue for President's Review. Nicole will let the commission know of any progress.

Nicole Pitterson opened the floor for additional discussion. As a followup to the April COR meeting topic of the current federal landscape, Karen Schnatterly reported that she sent a short survey to her colleagues in Pamplin and the most concern was related to policies that may affect working with international collaborators, particularly, marketing that research and whether or not they would be penalized. Laurel responded that Virginia Tech is strongly behind scholarly freedom and expression; however, federal funding opportunities may change as priorities shift. Closing out the conversation, Jon Petters noted that having senior administration share what information they have with the research community would be helpful during these times of uncertainty. Laurel announced that the Office of Research and Innovation will be hosting such an information session on May 9, 2025.

#### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:26 pm.