Research Council
Draft Standing Rules

Sent to Faculty Senate September 6, 2012 for approval.

The Research Council establishes policies for matters pertaining to sponsored research activities. It recommends priorities for distribution of various internal funding programs and for external solicitations that require limited submissions from the institution. The Research Council also reviews proposals for Centers and Institutes (CI), and is advisory to the Vice President for Research on matters related to CIs and on priorities regarding the support of institutional goals. The Council consists of sixteen Faculty members, preferably at least one from each college and includes one rotating member representing Research Centers and campuses located outside Benton County. The Administrator of the Research Office, or designee, shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Council. The Chair shall be a Faculty member with immediate prior experience on the Council, appointed annually by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The membership of the Research Council will adhere to the comprehensive conflict of interest policy of the Research Council.
Dear XXX and YYY,

The conduct of high quality, ethically unimpeachable research is of paramount importance to OSU and our constituent stakeholders. While each and every member of the university community has a personal responsibility to make sure that the scholarship performed meets those standards, the Research Council recognizes the unique role of the ZZZZZZZZ Committee in assisting the faculty, staff and students in attaining those standards.

Not surprisingly, we occasionally hear from members of our constituent groups when “things” don’t go as planned. To make sure we have a balanced perspective, we would request your attendance at the (date for one of the upcoming) Research Council meetings. We would appreciate it if you could provide a brief (10-12 minutes) discussion of your committee’s objectives and processes. The Council would especially like to hear from your perspective what the systemic issues and bottlenecks might be, as well as your perspective on what the best practices might be from other institutions. If you are pursuing solutions to specific issues, we would like to know if there is anything we can do from our position to help move those forward.

Thank you for attending to this request. We look forward to meeting with you at the (Date here) meeting.

Warmly,

Ricardo or Hillary

Research Council Minutes
OSU Research Council’s input on guiding principles for research Infrastructure recapitalization

The research mission of Oregon State University (OSU) as well as its capability to attract outstanding investigators and to provide high quality educational experience requires the availability of a safe and reliable environment in which research activities can be conducted. In this context, we believe that the large number of deferred maintenance issues regarding OSU’s infrastructure can compromise the quality of the research it supports. Acknowledging that limited resources are available to address this problem, a mechanism to identify priorities for the recapitalization of research infrastructure should be established. For this reason we propose the following four main guidelines for the prioritization of research infrastructure recapitalization:

A- PRESENT RESEARCH OBLIGATIONS AND LONGTERM RESEARCH VISION

1) **Ensuring the infrastructure needs required in order to fulfill the University’s contractual obligations with the state and funding agencies:** Ongoing activities supported through research grants and contracts require the availability of a safe and reliable infrastructure. The aging of many of our buildings, as well as the expansion of our research facilities in them puts at risk the safety and reliability of the spaces in which research activities are carried. For this reason, the maintenance and upgrading of the basic research infrastructure should remain a priority. Some of these basic priorities include:
   - Campus wide stable and high quality electricity.
   - Stable and high quality heating and cooling systems where needed.
   - Safety and accessibility of research spaces.
   - Integrity of research spaces (e.g. roof and window leaks).
   - Adequate lighting and hoods.

2) **Addressing need that will enhance the efficiency of the research enterprise at OSU, such as:**
   - Increase the availability of adequate research space. Many research units on campus find themselves limited by the availability of adequate laboratory space.
   - Improving our IT infrastructure that facilitates the sharing of data and documents while ensuring security and privacy.
   - Enhancing communication capabilities with colleagues around the world.

3) **Identifying future needs:**
   - Investment in Infrastructure recapitalization should prioritize support in the three signature areas of distinctions identified in our University’s Strategic Plan.
   - Long lasting solutions should be used when possible.
   - Effects on faculty recruitment and retention should be considered.

B- BREATH OF IMPACT ON THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Some potential examples are:
- Recapitalization projects, such as the availability campus wide of a stable power source should receive high priority.
- Infrastructure supporting research facilities that serve broad campus needs
C- COST ANALYSIS:

Some criteria used to address cost analysis should include:

- Projects that cannot be funded through alternative mechanisms.
- Infrastructure that supports research leading to potential revenue and with strong social and educational impact.
- Project costs are an important component of resource allocation decisions

D- REVIEW MECHANISM:

- Research Infrastructure Recapitalization mechanism should be announced broadly.
- Proposals should be solicited and reviewed annually or at some other set periodicity.
- Proposals should be reviewed by Research Council, or another university wide body.
Research Infrastructure Recapitalization

Fall 2012

IT/DATA:
➤ A researcher collaborating with scientists across campus resorts to using commercial cloud services to share data and documents among his colleagues. Costs notwithstanding, the security and privacy of this approach are vulnerabilities that he must accommodate in order to stay competitive in sponsored research.

ELECTRICAL:
➤ A newly hired faculty member has joined us after a post-doc at an Ivy League institution. Her research area promises to be a strong addition to the capabilities of OSU. Her startup package included acquisition of equipment that cannot be used since the electrical demands for its operation are not supported by the service capacity of the (98 year old) building where her lab is located.

TEMPERATURE/HVAC:
➤ In one laboratory alone, millions of dollars’ worth of sophisticated analytical instruments and data acquisition/management equipment are operated on the threshold of failure, since the chilled water system that should stabilize temperatures in the lab is inadequate, and fails regularly.

STRUCTURAL:
➤ Let’s put an animal science example in here ...

Each of these situations is an element of a broader challenge for Oregon State University: addressing long standing deferred maintenance issues that impact both the quality and quality of research and the educational experiences of the OSU community. Within this larger problem, the Research Office has a vested interest specifically in — identifying our priorities for recapitalization of research infrastructure. No doubt the demands for investment far exceed the available resources. Consequently, we currently deal with the situation by making do (i.e. not addressing the situation and resolving not to conduct important research), resorting to undesirable solutions (i.e. tolerating risk of equipment breakdowns, or erosion of research quality), or investing in an ad hoc fashion (by addressing the needs of the most vocal complainants first). None of these solutions is appropriate. The resolution lies in our taking a strategic approach to prioritizing the infrastructure recapitalization needs.
We may never fully address the shortfalls in research infrastructure, and we must assume that resource constraints will define an important limit to what we can fix, and when we can fix it. However, we also need to make the compelling case that attention to research infrastructure is critical as we work toward the goal of becoming a top 10 Land Grant institutions. Therefore, we must seek a fair, compelling and concise methodology for taking two important steps:

1) Establishing the criteria for prioritizing research infrastructure needs
2) Applying those criteria

The OSU Research Council (RC) and the Associate Deans of Research Advisory Council (ADRAC) are the two critical bodies that can move this issue forward. I recommend that the RC be charged with addressing the first step above (establishment of criteria), and the ADRAC follow up with defining how to move forward on the RC recommendations (applying the criteria).

To initiate this process, the leadership of the Research Office (RO) provides the following examples of criteria to be established for prioritization of research infrastructure investments, for consideration by the RC:

- Breadth of research applicability (broader is better)
- Cost avoidance of investing (higher is better)
- Sustainability of the solution (longer is better)
- Return on investment – research revenue and broader social and educational impact (higher is better)
- Commercialization potential (more, and more realistic are better)
- Faculty retention (more important than recruitment)
- Mission criticality (tied to Land Grant responsibilities)
- Other...

Similarly, the RO, recommends that the ADRAC define the strategic framework within which the prioritization criteria can be applied. This framework should incorporate such elements as:

- Use of the OSU capital campaign
- Leveraging existing resources
- Political opportunism
- Establishment of a dedicated funding base

The product of this effort will be a first-ever transparent definition of how OSU will define the investment priorities for expanding our capacities and capabilities as a leading research institution.