

University Senate Research Committee (USRC)
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2020

Meeting conducted by Zoom

Attended by: Iris Fineberg: Chair (School of Social Welfare), Chris Kretz (Library), Marci Lobel (Psychology), Anne McElroy (SoMAS), Thomas Robertazzi (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Tzu-Chieh Wei (Physics and Astronomy), Wei Zhu (Applied Mathematics and Statistics).

1. The Chair welcomed the committee back for the 2020-21 academic year. The committee took a few moments to remember and acknowledge the significance of this historic day (9/11) and to honor the individual and global impact that it carries.
2. Report about "Return to Research" Committee – Anne McElroy
Over the summer, Anne represented both SoMAS and our committee on the COVID-19 pandemic-related committee convened by Rich Reeder (VPR). The committee's charge was, in anticipation of research being one of the first activities to return to campus, to develop guidance on how that return should take place. The primary focus of the document was safety, but priority also was given to supporting people whose career trajectories would be significantly compromised by delays in the return to research activity. A significant challenge was that modalities of research are so varied across disciplines and places, so much flexibility was built into the guidance. Anne has not heard of any problems thus far with the return to research.
3. Discussion of current research challenges facing faculty
Committee members did not have current challenges to report but noted issues and questions related to the challenges of the pandemic.
 - a. How is the implementation of the open access policy doing at the library at this time when the importance of electronic access is accentuated? How has Inter-Library Loan adjusted?
 - b. The budget crisis is impacting hiring of new faculty due to the hiring freeze. Furthermore, early career faculty are concerned about the impact of current situation on their career progression.
 - c. What happens in Congress in the coming weeks regarding budget legislation may have significant impact on grant funding, especially government funds.
4. Looking forward
 - a. New committee members per the university-vote are anticipated to be identified and present at the next committee meeting.
 - b. Dr. Rich Reeder, the VPR, is scheduled to join our November meeting.