April 11, 2019

To: Faculty Senate

From: Faye Taxman and Amarda Shehu
On behalf of the Research Committee

This is a report from the Research Committee which consists of the following members: Faye S. Taxman (Chair), Amarda Shehu, Kimberly Sheridan, Bijan Jabbari, Jaime R. Lester, Gerald Hanweck and Christianne L. Esposito-Smythers on the activities since September 2018-April 2019.

The Research Committee routinely attends the Research Council meeting chaired by Dr. Deborah Crawford. They occur monthly. Attendees at this meeting are: Ali Andalibi, Amy Adams, Anthony E Kelly, Anthony Stefanidis, Arthur B Pyster, Aurali Dade, Bethany Usher, Charles Spann, Cody Edwards, Hina Mehta, Jayshree Sarma, Julie Zobel, Kerry D Bolognese, Kim Eby, Laura K Manno, Lisa C. Kahn, Mercedes Torres Price, Mike Laskofski, Michele Schwietz, Naoru Koizumi, Rebekah K Hersch, Richard Klimoski, Rodney Hopson, Saleet Jafri, Sara Cobb, Sean Mallon, William Hazel, Tonya T Neaves, Laurence Bray, David RehrEmeka Ezidinma, Gloria Garcia, , Heather Aleknavage, Kathleen Tutem, Kerriann Cardoza, Lillian Virgil, Susan B Woodruff, M Leigh Harrison, Alison Cuellar, Rebecca S Hartley, Faye Taxman, Amarda Shehu, Deborah Crawford and Natalie M Davis. These meetings are generally informational meetings devoted to discussing research and infrastructure issues. Topics of discussion have ranged from indirect cost distributions, ADR presentations of each school/college 2024 goals for research/scholarship/creative work with metrics for each unit, Harvard COACH Project and FACT Update, and other regular ongoing activities to address research at MASON.

A retreat was held on campus on December 6 and 7, 2018. The agenda covered research integrity, opportunities and challenges, case studies, SMARTGrowth and Future of Mason, research capacity building strategies including institutes, centers, labs and PIs, and the role of colleges and schools.

As per the specific questions.

1. During the past calendar year has the President or Provost announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President or Provost in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

Yes, the following realignment was announced. Deb Crawford (VP for Research) was appointed to lead a new Office of Research, Innovation and Economic Impact. The office has 3 units: 1) Research Development and Services team, led by
2) Research and Innovation Initiatives team led by Aurali Dade; and, 3) A Community and Economic Initiatives team (no named led as of yet). In addition, several multidisciplinary centers were announced.

The alignment was considered to be administrative which did not affect the research agenda of the University. But, the Research Committee was not consulted about this realignment or asked for guidance. It is unclear how much this realignment impacts the research agenda at Mason. The VPR related that this realignment was more of an administrative nature in order to meet the growing demand of responsibilities. If the realignment indeed impacts the research agenda, faculty input would have been important to incorporate.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President or Provost or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

The Research Committee did not seek information or input from anyone this past year.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

While the Research Committee is present at the Research Council meetings led by Dr. Crawford, these meetings are more administrative and informational. It would be beneficial if the representatives from the Research Council met with Dr. Crawford, Mr. Laskofski, and Dr. Dade three times a year to discuss matters related to the faculty, research, infrastructure, and other issues that cannot be addressed in the large meeting.

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President or Provost or their staff.