

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 3:00 pm Tuesday, February 8, via TEAMS, with Dr. Jeff Boles presiding.

Members Present: Dr. Jeff Boles, Dr. Jeremy Blair, Ms. Julie Brewer, Dr. Tania Datta, Dr. Ferdinand DiFurio, Dr. Shelia Hurley, Ms. Gail Ligon, Dr. Satish Mahajan, Dr. Hayden Mattingly, Dr. Rory Roberts, Dr. Terry Saltsman, Dr. Mark Stephens, Dr. Leslie Suters, and Dr. Jennifer Taylor

Members Absent: Dr. Kristen Deiter, Dr. Adam Holley, Mr. Greg Holt, Dr. Brian Leckie, Mr. Elijah Tidwell, and Ms. Megan Wharton

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

1. Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2021

The minutes from the November 18, 2021 meeting were reviewed with a motion to approve by Dr. Mahajan and a second by Dr. Hurley. Motion carried.

2. Announcements

Dr. Boles shared that Scholastic Research Award applications are due by February 28, 2022. The award has been announced in Tech Times and via an Office of Research email listserv. He asked committee members to help promote the award within the colleges and departments they represent. Dr. Boles will create a Zoom meeting for the award review process, so that the committee will have the option of anonymous voting through the poll feature.

3. Election of 2022-2023 URAC Chair

Dr. Mahajan led an effort to identify candidates for the position of URAC Chairperson for 2022-2023. Dr. Rory Roberts emerged as a candidate through the nomination process and is willing to serve. Dr. Boles called for additional nominations for consideration. No additional nominations were submitted. Dr. Roberts was elected by acclamation.

4. URAC Procedures

The committee reviewed the procedures updates which were emailed to members prior to the meeting. The updates created the Chair-Elect officer position. Dr. Hurley made a motion to accept the updated procedures, and Dr. Mahajan seconded. Motion carried. The committee discussed further updates to these procedures to better define qualifications needed for the Chair officer position. The committee discussed including a qualification that the individual be a research leader, such as acting as a Principal Investigator. Dr. Boles requested additional feedback from committee members. The updated procedures must be approved by the University Assembly before they become final. After the committee determines whether additional updates are needed, URAC will contact the Provost's office to make these arrangements.

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5. Report | Focus Group on Reducing Administrative Burdens in Research

The URAC focus group on reducing administrative burdens in research met and identified several areas for additional work, including start-up packages, workload policies, and expanded access to library materials. Members already participating in the focus group include Dr. Boles, Dr. Holley, Dr. Hurley, Dr. Roberts, and Dr. Taylor. Dr. Boles asked if any other members would be interested in joining these discussions, and Dr. Suters expressed an interest.

6. Legislative Update

Dr. Saltsman shared a legislative update, including news about funding for a second engineering building, a renovation of Johnson Hall, an increase in funding for the Cybersecurity Center, and additional support for Rural Reimagined.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Storie, Committee Support Personnel

Date approved by committee: 04/12/2022