

Arts and Sciences Council  
Committee on Faculty Research  
Report, 2009-2011

Committee Charge:

“The Committee on Faculty Research has two responsibilities: a) It shall administer funds made available to the Committee each year by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the Committee will allocate these funds by awarding grants for research, for conferences hosted at Duke University, and for conference travel expenses incurred by members of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, and b) it shall address larger issues of research that are important for Arts and Sciences faculty.”

Introduction:

For the last two years, the committee has been largely inactive due to budget cuts initiated by Dean McLendon in the spring of 2009. I was informed that starting this fall (2011), we will have 50k to distribute in the form of research grants for the upcoming year. This will allow us to give roughly a dozen awards with our prior cap of 5k per award. The total amount is for \$150k (including both research and travel grants).

--Meetings

We have had no meetings in the last two years due to budget cuts.

--Basic activities

In the last two years, I've dealt with questions from faculty and have made decisions about the rare special case (for travel funds). Staff member Shawn MacDuff has assisted me during this time period; prior to this we had the support of Maryscot Mullins. The committee as a whole has not met since spring, 2009.

--Main accomplishments

For the past three years, our only mission was to provide limited travel support to faculty who lack research or startup funds; research and conference grants for all regular rank faculty has been eliminated until budget conditions improve.

--Challenges

Our main challenge, obviously, is to return to a situation where we can once again provide research and conference support as well as travel funds to all regular rank faculty. In particular, research support has been seen by the committee as crucial – it

helps fields without great amounts of external funding to conduct research; it helps junior faculty gain tenure; and it often serves as seed grants for larger, external grants. While cutting these funds made sense given the fiscal climate, it is not as obvious that the long term effect is positive. Seed grants seem particularly worthwhile, especially given the fact that they often lead to external grants (and thus likely overhead for the university) – to our knowledge, no cost / benefit analysis was ever performed to measure the indirect effects of this portion of our budget.

Committee Members:

Scott deMarchi (Political Science), *Chair*

Owen Astrachan (Computer Science)

Steven Baldwin (Chemistry)

Edward Balleisen (History)

John Brown (Music)

Michaeline Crichlow (African and African American Studies)

Roberto Dainotto (Romance Studies)

Sharon Holland (English)

Paul Manos (Biology)

Neil McWilliam (Art, Art History and Visual Studies)

Diane Nelson (Cultural Anthropology)