

University Enrichment Committee Final Report

2013-2014

2013-2014 UEC Membership:

David Andresen (sabbatical, Fall term), Amy Odegard, Wayne Rickoll, Sara Shapiro, Justin Tiehen (chair Fall 2013), Carl Toews (chair Spring 2014), Stacey Weiss, Rand Worland. Student members: Gabe Davis, Robin Vanhouten.

The senate charges to the 2013-2014 University Enrichment Committee in addition to the committee's regular business were:

1. Develop a request for increased funding for faculty and student research and conference travel to be submitted to Associate Dean Martin Jackson and the BTF.
2. Investigate the logistics of a per diem system for food during university travel, including how a per diem may be implemented with current and future versions of People Soft.
3. Determine how the UEC might shift its role in providing oversight of faculty conference travel requests in light of the university's move to People Soft and the P-card system.
4. Continue to develop and implement the UEC Faculty Scholarship Award.
5. Work to promote UEC grants and deadlines to faculty and students and make recommendations to the Associate Deans' Office for updating the UEC webpage.
6. Make recommendations to increase the visibility of faculty and student scholarship collaborating with LMIS as needed.
7. Investigate ways to streamline UEC student research grant application submission for students who already apply for summer research stipends.

Committee Actions Regarding Usual Duties Related to Travel, Research, and Release Time Awards

1. Faculty Travel Funding

As of April 30, the UEC has received a total of 99 travel requests for a total of \$98,717. The year-to-date total amount allocated to funding faculty travel is \$69,194 (although many faculty still need to submit receipts.)

2. Faculty Research Funding

The committee received a total of 14 applications for faculty research funding (12 in the Fall, 2 in the Spring.) The total amount requested was \$17,948, and the total amount awarded was \$12,611.

3. Release Time Requests

The UEC received six applications for release time. Every application was granted.

4. Student Research and Travel Funding

In the Fall, the UEC received 13 applications for student travel funding and 23 applications for student research funding. Requests for travel support amounted to \$6100, and the actual funding level was \$5787. Requests for research dollars amount to \$12,142, and actual research funding was \$8907.

In the Spring, the committee received 38 requests for travel support and 43 requests for research funding. Requests for travel funding amounted to \$13,777, and the actual funding rate was \$5161. Requests for research funding amounted to \$21,060, and the actual funding rate is pending committee decisions.

5. Trimble Asian Studies Professional Development Awards

The UEC received two applications for Trimble Asian Studies awards, and both were awarded. The total outlay for the two awards was \$10,000.

6. Selection of Register Lecturer for 2014

The UEC is currently in the process of selecting the recipient of the 2014 Register Award. There are five applications. The selection process will be completed at the Friday, May 2 2014 UEC meeting.

Committee Actions Regarding Senate Charges

1. Develop a request for increased funding for faculty and student research and conference travel to be submitted to Associate Dean Martin Jackson and the BTF.

We developed this request and submitted it.

2. Investigate the logistics of a per diem system for food during university travel, including how a per diem may be implemented with current and future versions of People Soft.

Current university practice is to reimburse only for expenses incurred. A transition to a per diem system would run counter to this process, and thus probably need approval at the level of the Board of Trustees. As the UEC has no understanding of either the origin or the intent of the suggestion to move to a per diem, the committee felt that pursuing the second part of the charge (to investigate implementation of such a system in People Soft) would be premature.

3. Determine how the UEC might shift its role in providing oversight of faculty conference travel requests in light of the university's move to People Soft and the P-card system.

The UEC determined that at the moment, no shift of role seemed called for: conference funding requests are typically vetted by the assistant Dean's office and rubber stamped if the request falls within funding guidelines. Applications come before the UEC only in special cases (e.g. retroactive reimbursement, cases of unusual itineraries, etc.) and these cases should continue to come before the UEC, regardless of PeopleSoft, a P-card system, or any other technological convenience.

4. Continue to develop and implement the UEC Faculty Scholarship Award.

Last year the UEC submitted a draft proposal for this award to the FAC and Dean Bartanen. The FAC posed some questions about the award, and requested clarification on certain points. The UEC drafted a response to these questions, and sought to improve the language in the proposed award criteria. The response and revised criteria have been submitted to Dean Bartanen and the FAC.

5. Work to promote UEC grants and deadlines to faculty and students and make recommendations to the Associate Deans' Office for updating the UEC webpage.

Considerable improvements were made to the layout of the webpage describing UEC funding opportunities. Moreover, a link to this page was placed on the drop-down "Faculty" menu under the Academics section of the main Puget Sound web page.

6. Make recommendations to increase the visibility of faculty and student scholarship collaborating with LMIS as needed.

We debated various ways of increasing this visibility, including blurbs in Arches, Wednesday at 4 sessions, and a special "showcase" webpage. To generate the data necessary to support any of these forums, we discussed introducing a new "reporting requirement" in the award descriptions. As the improved UEC webpage has only recently come online, we did not have time to pursue any of these ideas with any particular vigor, but would encourage next year's committee to look into them.

7. Investigate ways to streamline UEC student research grant application submission for students who already apply for summer research stipends.

We discussed this idea at length, and feel that some streamlining would be useful. On the other hand, streamlining to the point of direct resubmission of existing materials was seen as inimical to the

spirit of the award, as would taking funding recommendations directly from the committee that evaluated the summer research files. Ultimately, the UEC decided that a reasonable middle ground would be to allow resubmittal of summer research applications, but with a new coverletter discussing the various budgetary contingencies in the event of a failed summer funding bid. The target implementation date for these changes is Spring 2015.

Recommendations for next year's committee:

1. Continue to pursue ways to showcase creative and scholarly work that is supported by UEC funding. Some small additional reporting requirement seems a reasonable way to generate the raw information for this showcasing. These reports could be archived within a dedicated webpage, and linked to prominently. Hard copy publications like Arches, or softcopy publications like Open Line, represent good alternative options for displaying funded work. In pursuing this line of thought, attention should be paid to the matter of for whom the showcasing is really intended. Three likely candidate groups include prospective student applicants, alumni, and current award-eligible faculty.
2. Continue to pursue the implementation of a Scholarship Award that directly parallels the existing Teaching Award. Symmetry between these two awards would draw attention to and support the teacher/scholar model that lies at the heart of the liberal arts experience.
3. Investigate the feasibility and desirability of implementing three separate application deadlines for three separate funding periods: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Currently, there are two application deadlines (one in Fall, one in Spring) and funding from either must terminate at the end of the summer. It has been argued that this puts applicants for Fall research funding at a disadvantage, or in the position of needing to request retroactive funding. Any solution to the problem must take into account university budget cycles.
4. Formalize and publicize rules for a "streamlined" application for summer student research support. In particular, make clear what exactly needs to appear in the revised coverletter, and how budgetary contingencies should be dealt with. These guidelines would ideally be formalized in the Fall semester, so as to allow implementation in the Spring.

The University Enrichment Committee (UEC) requests from the Budget Task Force (BTF) additional funds totaling **\$50,000**; that is, \$50,000 more than the 2013-14 BTF allocation of \$138,000, for a total yearly allocation of \$188,000. This would amount to a 36.2% increase in funds for the UEC. What follows is a breakdown of the spending categories covered by our request together with observations supporting our case for additional funds.

1. Regarding **Faculty Travel**, the 2013-14 allocation from the BTF was \$93,000, while a balance of \$11,100 is carried forward from the 2012-13 year, adding up to a total of \$104,100. This figure is well below the 2012-13 disbursement for faculty travel, which was \$113,397. That is a difference of $-\$9,297$; or, counting just the BTF allocation of \$93,000 (and not the balance carried forward), it is a difference $-\$20,398$. Furthermore, the \$93,000 BTF allocation would fail to cover faculty travel expenses in 4 of the last 6 years, with an average shortfall of \$19,000. The trend in faculty conference travel expenses is increasing by roughly \$3,000 per year (assuming a simple linear model), and so increased funding is needed to keep place.

In addition to these numbers, which largely speak for themselves, the UEC believes that the caps presently set on travel grants—that is, the \$1,350 cap for conferences within the country, the \$1,570 cap for international conferences, and the \$125 per diem cap for hotel expenses—are no longer adequate. This is perhaps especially true of the per diem cap, as hotel room costs, even at (comparatively low) conference rates, regularly run higher than \$125 per night.

Looking at the $-\$20,398$ difference between the 2013-14 BTF allocation and the 2012-13 disbursement, and considering the need for higher caps on travel grants, and finally bearing in mind that the UEC does not want to keep coming back to the BTF year after year to ask for more funds given the noted trend in faculty travel expenses, the UEC requests an additional **\$35,000** from the BTF for Faculty Travel; that is, \$35,000 more than the 2013-14 allocation of \$93,000, and so a total yearly allocation of \$128,000.

2. Regarding **Faculty Research**, the 2013-14 allocation from the BTF was \$17,500, while an additional \$5,000 is projected to be available from the Phibbs Fund, adding up to a total of \$22,500. By comparison, the 2012-13 total disbursement for faculty research was \$19,642, a figure that is less than the \$22,500 total that the UEC has for this category, but greater than the \$17,500 BTF allocation taken alone.

In connection with Faculty Research, the UEC has been charged this year with developing a Faculty Research Award. Roughly, the idea is that what the Phibbs Awards are for recognizing teaching excellence, these new Faculty Research Awards will be for recognizing research excellence. Establishing such awards would help the UEC pursue several of the goals outlined in our charges, including promoting the visibility of faculty research that is often aided by the UEC. Under

the present category of Faculty Research, then, the UEC requests an additional **\$3,000** from the BTF to support two such annual awards of \$1,500 each; that is, \$3,000 more than the 2013-14 allocation of \$17,500 for Faculty Research, and so a yearly allocation of \$20,500.

3. Regarding **Student Research and Travel Funding**, the present year's allocation from the BTF was \$27,500, while an additional \$2,400 is estimated to be available from ASUPS, adding up to a total of \$29,900. This figure is well below the 2012-13 total disbursement for student research and travel funding, which was \$40,861—a difference of $-\$10,961$.

Breaking down that 2012-13 disbursement total by sub-category: (i) the UEC awarded a total of \$23,120 for 52 different student travel grants, while (ii) the UEC awarded a total of \$17,741 for 56 different student research grants. Regarding (ii), the UEC limited its awards in 2012-13 to an average of \$317 per award, in comparison with the \$500 cap on such awards, because of budget limitations we faced as a result of an unexpectedly high number of student travel grants awarded. If the UEC had given \$500 per award for all 56 awards, the disbursement total for (ii) would be \$28,000 rather than \$17,741. The upshot is that the $-\$10,961$ difference between the funds we have available for 2013-14 and our disbursement level in 2012-13 actually understates our demand for funding worthy student research projects.

An additional point worth noting is that the Fall 2012 semester saw an unusually high number of applications for research grants coming from the graduate students in Occupational and Physical Therapy (OT/PT). In previous years, many OT/PT graduate students were able to get outside funding for their research projects from a Grove Grant that their departments had secured, rather than applying to the UEC for funding their projects. However, as of 2012-13 this outside grant is no longer available, and so now the OT/PT graduate students are more dependent than they had been in the past on UEC awards—a reason for the BTF to increase the allocation for this category.

Going beyond this past year and looking longer term, the committee received 103 applications for student research and travel funding in 2012-13, 97 applications in 2011-12, 94 applications in 2010-11, and before that yearly averages in applications of between 60-70. So, there is a clear upward trend in applications.

Finally, the UEC feels strongly that student research and conference participation based on such research contributes significantly to our mission as a university. It is something that we as a university really should be strongly supporting. In light of the numbers cited here, the upward trends in applications for funding, and the point made above that the UEC does not want to have to return to the BTF time after time to ask for increased funding, we request an additional \$15,000 for Student Research and Travel; that is, \$15,000 more than the 2013-14 allocation of \$29,900, for a total yearly allocation of \$44,900.