November 2011

Research Faculty Policy and Revised Guidelines

Background and Summary of Changes

A faculty Working Group was convened in the spring of 2010 by the Vice President for Research to review the "Research Faculty Implementation Guidelines" that were issued by the Office of the Vice President for Research in 2005. These guidelines were developed in response to University Senate Document 04-4 that defined the position of Research Faculty at Purdue University in January of 2005. After interviewing personnel (department heads/center directors/graduate school associate dean) that were directly involved in the appointment/promotion of research faculty and the thirty-two research faculty themselves, the Working Group made suggestions for revisions to the original guidelines. These revisions are reflected in the draft university policy for "Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion" and the revised "Guidelines for Research Faculty".

The most significant changes concern the sources of funds eligible to support research faculty and the opportunity for research faculty appointed in non-degree granting units (e.g., interdisciplinary centers) to mentor graduate students. The original guidelines prohibited the use of internal Purdue funds to support research faculty. While it is necessary that research faculty be supported primarily by external funds, it is also recognized that certain activities (proposal writing, graduate student mentorship) cannot be charged to federal awards that support specific research projects. Therefore, the new policy allows the use of unrestricted internal funds (e.g., gift and general funds) for the partial support of research faculty. The new policy creates the opportunity for research faculty appointed in non-academic units to affiliate with an academic unit and serve as a mentor to graduate students in that unit.

Three draft documents relating to the appointment and promotion of Research Faculty were distributed on the West Lafayette and regional campuses for review and comment in early 2011: 1) the new policy for "Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion"; 2) a revised "Guidelines for Research Faculty"; and 3) "Frequently Asked Questions". The draft University Policy for "Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion" and the revised "Guidelines for Research Faculty" documents were initially presented for information to the University Senate Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) at its January 10, 2011. During the spring of 2011, the documents were formally presented to the FAC with a request for endorsement. The Chair of the Research Faculty Working Group met frequently with the FAC discussing the documents and listening to comments and concerns. As a result of those discussions, the documents were re-revised as requested by the FAC. The most significant revision placed a cap on the amount of internal, unrestricted Purdue funds (gift or general funds) that could be applied to the compensation for Research Faculty. At a special FAC meeting on September 19, 2011 devoted to the Research Faculty documents, the FAC voted to endorse the re-revised draft policy for "Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion" and the re-revised "Guidelines for Research Faculty". The endorsed, revised "Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion" policy (Senate Document 11-1) was presented to the University Senate Steering Committee for presentation to the University Senate. The Steering Committee requested a change in format for Senate Document 11-1 and the newly formatted version was formally approved for endorsement by the FAC on November 7, 2011 and re-presented to Steering Committee.