

September 25, 2015

SENATE RESEARCH OFFICERS COMMITTEE (ROC)

2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR FINAL REPORT

Here we provide brief summaries of the highest-priority issues that the ROC addressed during the past year.

Salary Minimum for Associate Research Scientists/Scholars: This is one of our major successes of the past year. Many associate research scientist/scholars (ARSs) are promoted to this position when their eligibility as a postdoc runs out after five years in that position. The previous minimum ARS salary was less than the NIH salary for a fifth-year postdoctoral researcher. This past year the ROC recommended that the minimum ARS be set to the NIH salary for a fifth-year postdoctoral researcher. The Office of the Provost accepted the recommendation and implemented it starting with the current fiscal year on July 1, 2015.

Salary equity study: In February 2014, the Office of the Provost released its latest Salary Study of Officers of Research. This study was a follow-up to the Provost's previous study, released in May 2010. The earlier study found a number of statistically significant differentials in pay by gender and race/ethnicity and included recommendations for addressing this issue. Unfortunately the follow-up study found almost exactly the same pay differentials. The ROC is concerned about these pay differentials and urges the administration to address these issues on a timely basis.

Postdoctoral researcher issues: The ROC continues to be concerned about a range of issues for postdocs. For example, Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRFs) must cover their own health insurance costs from their fellowships, some of which do not include funds for such costs. The 310 PDRFs at Columbia are the cream of the next generation of researchers and bring about \$13 million each year to the university in research funds. We have a vital interest in attracting as many PDRFs as possible to Columbia. Moreover, they should not be effectively penalized by choosing to bring their fellowship to Columbia. Many of our peer institutions already provide such support. For Columbia to remain competitive in attracting PDRFs, we should match what our sister schools already do.

Effort reporting: In January 2015 the ROC held town hall meetings on the Morningside campus, at CUMC, and at Lamont for Professional Research Officers and Staff Officers of Research. Major concerns were raised relating to federally required effort reporting. Many who attended said that insufficient non-sponsored support was available for writing grant applications.

Meetings with university administrators and others:

- Amy L. Nurnberger, Research Data Manager, Center for Digital Research and Scholarship; Candice Kail, Web Services Librarian, Libraries Digital Program; Simone Sacchi, Research Scholarship Initiatives Manager (02 Dec 2014).
- Carol Hoffman, Associate Provost and Director of Work-Life, Offices of the Provost and Human Resources (17 Feb 2015).
- G. Michael Purdy, Executive Vice President for Research; Naomi Schrag, Associate Vice President, Research Compliance; Anne Sullivan, Executive Vice President for Finance; Sharyn O'Halloran, Senate Executive Committee Chair; Jeanine D'Armiento, Associate Professor of Medicine (17 Mar 2015).
- Stephen Rittenberg, Vice Provost (14 Apr 2015).
- Geraldine Mc Allister, Senate Director (19 May 2015).
- Rory Flinn, Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (18 Aug 2015).

Some issues for the coming year:

- Salary equity
- Benefits for part-time ROs
- Effort reporting
- Authorship
- Housing
- Termination policy
- Professional research officer issues
- Postdoctoral researcher issues
- Staff officer issues

Respectfully,

University Senate Research Officers Committee (2014-2015)

Daniel Wolf Savin, Chair, *Senior Research Scientist*, Astrophysics Laboratory

Mercy Davidson, *Senior Research Scientist*, Radiation Oncology

Aditya Dutta, *Associate Research Scientist*, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center

Francesco Lotti, *Associate Research Scientist*, Department of Pathology and Cell Biology

Smaranda Muresan, *Research Scientist*, Computational Learning Systems

Angela D. Nelson, *Senior Staff Associate*, Medicine

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