

Robert Holland Faculty Senate resolution against *mandating* faculty academic time on proposals

Proposed by Senators representing Bagley College of Engineering faculty: **Adrian Sescu, Andy Perkins, Lauren Priddy, Neeraj Rai, and Santanu Kundu** (names appear in alphabetical order)

WHEREAS, in the Summer of 2023, Bagley College of Engineering (BCoE) implemented **EOP 37 Academic Time on Research Proposals (hereafter referred to as the policy)**, which requires faculty to budget 0.5 months of the academic year (AY) salary for every 1.0 month of Summer salary requested on all grant proposals (i.e., 2:1 ratio of summer: AY salary). This policy was voted into effect by BCoE department heads without faculty input and signed by the Dean, effective June 13, 2023. A similar policy was implemented in the Spring of 2022 in the Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering without any faculty input.

WHEREAS, the establishment of this policy did not follow the shared governance model outlined in the Faculty Handbook Section C: Principles for University Governance. For example, the faculty handbook states:

- a. *“Effective university governance includes consultation with the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents on budget, policy, and procedure matters.”*
- b. *“To facilitate open communication and effective university governance, the university's president and other administrative officers will exercise due diligence in consulting with the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents on issues affecting them.”*

WHEREAS, this policy has begun affecting faculty from other colleges. Non-BCoE faculty members submitting collaborative proposals with BCoE faculty must adhere to this policy.

WHEREAS, Code for Federal Regulations (CFR 200.403 Factors affecting allowability of cost) stipulates: *“Be **consistent** with policies and procedures that apply **uniformly** to both federally-financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity;”* CFR 200.430 compensation of personal services stipulates that compensation: *“Is reasonable for the services rendered and conforms to the established written policy of the non-Federal entity **consistently** applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities;”*

WHEREAS, according to the National Science Foundation (NSF) Proposal & Award Policies & Procedure Guide (PAPPG) (NSF23-1) Section f(i): “*NSF regards research as one of the normal functions of faculty members at institutions of higher education. Compensation for time normally spent on research within the term of appointment is deemed to be included within the faculty member’s regular organizational salary.*” In other words, NSF does not expect to fund AY salary on proposals, and budgeting AY salary could decrease the competitiveness of NSF proposals submitted by MSU faculty.

WHEREAS, NSF limits the total compensation to 2.0 months from all NSF-funded projects for an individual. According to EOP 37, that would allow only 1.33 summer months' salary and 0.67 months academic year salary. Especially for faculty whose research is largely funded by NSF, this will limit their opportunity to receive summer salary. More broadly, EOP 37 will hinder faculty recruitment and retention.

THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED,

that the Robert Holland Faculty Senate advises the University President to take immediate corrective actions to rescind any department or college-level policies (including EOP 37) that *mandate* faculty budget academic year (AY) salary when requesting summer salary on externally funded proposals.

BAGLEY COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE
EOP 37
Academic Time on Research Proposals

PURPOSE

Many funding agencies permit faculty to charge academic time in addition to summer support on research proposals to support activities associated with fulfilling deliverables. Given that project PIs and coPIs perform project related duties over the course of the entire year, there is an expectation that investigators provide a fair balance of academic and summer time in their project budgets.

REVIEW

This EOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Bagley College of Engineering Administrative Council with recommendations for revision presented to the Dean.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

The following guidelines have been endorsed by the department heads in preparing proposal budgets when allowed by the funding agency.

- A 2 : 1 ratio of summer : academic time (for one month of summer, one-half month of academic time / release) is the base expectation for all grants
- Thus, for a full summer (3 months), 1.5 months of academic time should be budgeted
- Department heads have the final decision on approving / releasing their faculty from teaching obligations. However, as a rule of thumb, these are recommended guidelines:
 - 1/8th (or 12.5%) of the 9-month salary (1.125 months) of academic time is needed to buy out of a course
 - To buy out of a second course, the total release on all grants required would be 2.25 months (25% to the 9-month salary)
- Academic time budgeted in proposals is typically not permitted to be reallocated to support summer support unless there are extenuating circumstances
- Academic units are encouraged to develop policies to incentivize their faculty to participate in this and similar programs. As an example, a department may want to adopt a policy to return a portion of any release above 2.25 months to the investigator or develop another revenue sharing models (e.g., share of returned overhead)

APPROVED:



Jason M. Keith
Dean of Engineering

Effective June 13, 2023

BCOE General Faculty Meeting Summary

August 17th, 2023

Dean Jason Keith, Associate Dean Kari Babski-Reeves, Assistant Dean Robert Green, and several faculty members attended the meeting.

Dr. Keith provided the following updates regarding the enrollment, research funding, and endowment.

- As of August 17th, 2023, the Fall enrollment for the college increased by 15 students compared to last year. The enrollment in the Computer Science Department increased by 100, whereas that in the Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Department decreased by 100.
- The research expenditure for the university was above \$300 MM, and out of that BCOE expenditure was ~\$70 MM. The Engineering research expenditure was in the top 50 in the US.
- The Mechanical Engineering department has received a \$16.5 MM gift. Several endowed chair positions will be established in the next few years.

Dr. Keith also provided his input on the recently approved policy, EOP 37: Academic Time on Research Proposals. One of the most salient points of this policy is that for one month of summer, one-half month of academic time release needs to be included in any research proposal.

According to Dr. Keith:

- This policy follows the federal regulation, Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards.
- For about 2 years, there has been an ad-hoc policy in a few departments (e.g., ISE, ME), and this policy formalized the process.
- Since faculty members are working on a project throughout the academic year, including mentoring graduate students, travel etc, this policy accounts for that time.
- Followed by many peer and peer+ institutions
- The policy has been discussed with VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, VP for Research and Economic Development and they are considering this policy
- Research centers (e.g., CAVS) already have an existing policy similar to this for travel charged to projects.
- Some faculty positions are soft funded. This is an equitable approach for the tenure track faculty since the research faculty need to raise funding to support their salary.
- The purpose of this policy is to solve financial issues.

Dr. Lauren Priddy followed up with a question about whether federal policy distinguishes summer vs academic time. Dr. Keith indicated that it does not.

Dr. John E. Ball asked whether this policy is applicable to NSF proposals, as NSF does not prefer to support academic time. Dr. Baski-Reeves indicated that with justification, it is allowed (up to 1-2%). Dr. Keith indicated up to 5% is OK.

Dr. Santanu Kundu asked how 2 : 1 ratio of summer: academic time was decided and what basis (math) was used for that. Dr. Keith indicated that the policy was discussed in the department head forum, and

he and the department heads decided on it, as they thought it was a better choice than 1:1. No other basis was used.

Other topics discussed in the meeting:

Dr. Lesley Strawderman raised the issue regarding Gulf Coast Campus students being required to register for Distance Campus courses and pay associated distance fees. It was noted that these are offered at a reduced rate.

There was general discussion regarding Chat-GPT in instructional setting. Ms. Amy Barton, Program Coordinator & Instructor of Technical Writing, provided an update regarding the students use/misuse of Chat-GPT in the technical writing course.