

Academic Support Committee Report AY 10-11

Christye Sisson and Kathleen Lamkin-Kinnard, co-chairs

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SCB Defers		

Charges for 2010-2011

I. Prepare a motion for the adoption of a policy that provides guidelines for use of self-published materials and for faculty use of own publications as course requirements in consultation with the Individual Conflict of Interest / Commitment Committee. Recommend appropriate placement for the policy in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

The committee, in consultation with RIT Legal Affairs, believes the existing Conflict of Interest Policy and Intellectual Property Policy as stated in the RIT policies and procedures manual adequately addresses the issue of self-publishing and faculty use of

own publications as course requirements. We recommend the following to increase awareness and compliance:

- Mandatory training for new faculty and first-line supervisors in the Conflict of Interest and Intellectual Property Policies
- Inclusion of the terms “self-publishing” and “faculty use of own publications” within the Conflict of Interest survey/questionnaire required yearly
- Inclusion of self-publishing/publishing within the ICIC Employee/Supervisor training as a case study, and listing of publishing as required reported activity

The supporting documentation for this recommendation includes:

- Review of the Individual Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy (<http://finweb.rit.edu/legalaffairs/individualconflict.html>) with Erica Duthiers of RIT Legal Affairs. This review included the following:

“...to the extent that any faculty member authors a book, and then requires his/her class to purchase the book, thereby leading to financial gain for the faculty member, the faculty member must disclose this to his/her “immediate supervisor” because it is an activity that results in “personal, professional, commercial or financial interest” and may “influence[] the employee’s decision or behavior with respect to teaching...or other matters of interest to the Institute” and or result in “personal...gain at the expense of the Institute.” (ICIC Policy, Scope of Policy, 1.) “

The same analysis would apply if discussing a self-published text where students were required to purchase the text as a class requirement. Whether the faculty member is charging the student only to “recoup costs”, actually collecting royalty or receiving other remuneration does not change the analysis. The faculty member is still involved in “income producing activities involving RIT students”, which requires disclosure. (RIT Disclosure and Prior Approval Form, Question No. 3.)

- In conjunction with this review, Legal Affairs did not feel that a modification of the current policy is warranted, but recommended that this committee should specifically state that the scope of the relatively new and sufficiently broad ICIC policy does apply in the context of self-publishing, and provides for a course of action including annual disclosures, conflict management, oversight, sanctions, and appeals.
- <http://finweb.rit.edu/legalaffairs/disclosure.html> (Disclosure procedures)
- <http://finweb.rit.edu/legalaffairs/compliance.html> (Compliance procedures)

Therefore, the ASC does not recommend an amendment to the current Conflict of Interest and Intellectual Property Policy. However, the committee would like to emphasize that disclosure of conflict does not preclude a faculty member from using

his/her own texts in a course, but that the policy provides for disclosure and management of the actual or perceived conflict. Management may include a plan that requires faculty to get approval at the appropriate level to mitigate the appearance of impropriety.

II. Review the Wallace Center reorganization and proposed expansion of facilities in consultation with Lynn Wild. Report the impact of changes and, where appropriate, recommend improvements to the Senate.

The committee met with the Wallace Center representatives Lynn Wild and Shirley Bower in the fall, and Shirley came on to serve on the committee as a midyear replacement. This arrangement has allowed for the exchange of feedback among the committee and the Wallace Center, and has provided the committee with a more thorough understanding of the internal challenges facing the Wallace Center as it works to provide resources in the context of shifting publishing models and pricing structure. The implication of new centers on campus, including the new Institute for Health Sciences, also has an impact on the center's ability to negotiate subscription brackets.

The core functions of the Wallace Center have not changed as a result of the merger, the merger resulted in a larger academic support unit on campus, blending the strengths of both organizations and increasing operational effectiveness/efficiency. Major challenges that exist are challenges that existed prior to the merger.

The committee expresses its continued interest in facilitating feedback for the Wallace Center as a point of contact with the respective faculty of member colleges, particularly as it relates to providing the Center with workable data related to subscription and renewal and the emerging challenges of electronic publishing and e-journals.

III. Review the policies and procedures of Sponsored Research Services and Sponsored Programs Accounting services and examine their effectiveness. Identify ways to streamline and simplify the administrative part of working with contracts and grants in consultation with Don Boyd. Report recommendations to Senate.

The committee met with David Bond, Director of Sponsored Research Services, who provided a description of the services provided by SRS as well as a discussion of some of the challenges SRS is experiencing as RIT moves to a more research-oriented institution. SRS is moving to the adoption of COEUS, a MIT-originated proposal development and pre and post award management system.

Challenges have included the management of special pools of federal funding (as part of the economic stimulus) that require higher levels of reporting. Higher levels of reporting

and an increase in the overall number of proposals submitted at RIT necessitates greater allocation of SRS resources and reduces the amount of time that SRS personnel have available to perform activities, such as identification of funding sources, other than just submission of proposals for individual PIs. State funding has dried up, and federal funding is the mainstay for research at this time. Competition for these funds is increasing dramatically, which in turn means that much time and effort is spent by individual faculty on proposals that may be excellent, but the proposals may ultimately not be funded due to the sheer number applying to the same resource pool.

SRS does provide training for those individuals within colleges (PIs, administrators) that may deal with budget allocation, but this training is voluntary and internal audits have identified a gap between support within the individual colleges and SRS. Increasingly, federal and corporate systems are becoming paperless; this has been problematic as troubleshooting the individual systems takes time and consumes SRS time and resources. One consequence of the increased complexity is that SRS staff are not as able to aid individual faculty in identifying funding sources due to other challenges. As research at RIT continues to grow, they are often working on big centralized proposals that take a lot of time, thus less time is available to do outreach as they work toward deadlines and implementation and processing of proposals. Additional staffing or resources would enable SRS to both aid in identification and preparation of proposals as well as to assist in proposal submission.

Once a project is funded, the management is turned over to Sponsored Projects accounting.

The primary recommendation of the committee is to raise awareness on campus related to the role of Sponsored Research Services and the services offered by SRS. Across the University, there are varying levels of awareness of SRS and faculty in many cases become self-reliant rather than utilizing resources available through SRS. The committee also recommends that the Academic Support Committee retains its role as a focus group for SRS and to serve as a conduit for SRS to disseminate information and obtain feedback from the faculty.