

## **Research Council Recommendations Regarding Interdisciplinary Research (DRAFT of January 25, 2012)**

### Overview:

The Research Council is well aware that most new federal grant opportunities and most of the growth in funding for federally funded research are for the support of interdisciplinary research. For example, NSF recently launched a new program called Integrated NSF Support Promoting Interdisciplinary Research and Education (INSPIRE). It is the goal of INSPIRE to “foster and support interdisciplinary research both in the form of funding potentially transformative research...as well as identifying and lowering barriers to interdisciplinary research within NSF and in the research community”. Other agencies including NIH, DOE, and USDA are also increasing support for interdisciplinary research and launching new interdisciplinary research programs. Given this reality as well as President Cruzado’s desire to enhance interdisciplinary research at MSU the Research Council spent considerable time during fall semester 2011 in discussion of ways to enhance interdisciplinary research. The Research Council feels that one of the primary obstacles at MSU is the inability of faculty to hold a joint appointment between two departments or between a department and a research center/institute. These types of appointments, which are common at most universities, facilitate interdisciplinary activity by recognizing and rewarding scholarly contributions that transcend a single discipline. This white paper provides a summary of recommendations concerning joint appointments that the Research Council would like the campus community to consider and hopefully endorse.

### Joint-appointment Hires:

Joint appointments can be between two tenure-granting units (i.e., departments) or between a tenure-granting unit and a research center. For faculty jointly appointed to a department and a research center, the faculty’s allocation to the department will be greater than or equal to 50 percent, and the department will serve as the “home” for the faculty. For faculty jointly appointed to two departments, the one with greater allocation or (if the allocation is 50-50) the one specified in the letter of hire will serve as the “home” department. The home department will be responsible for initiating annual reviews and promotion and tenure reviews, with the secondary appointment affiliation directly involved in both annual and promotion and tenure reviews.

An agreement by the responsible center director and/or department heads and the faculty member will specify in writing, at the initiation of a joint appointment, procedures for annual and promotion and tenure reviews. This arrangement will be subject to approval by relevant department heads; center directors; deans; the Vice President of Research, Creativity, and Technology Transfer; and Provost. Joint-appointment hiring agreements may address interdisciplinary teaching as well as departmental teaching and service activities.

### Annual Reviews:

A faculty member jointly appointed to two departments will receive a single annual review weighted by the percent allocation to each department, and prepared by the department with the largest percent allocation (in a 50/50 split the lead department will be identified by mutual agreement at the time the appointment is made). A faculty member with joint appointment to a department and a center will receive a single annual review prepared by the department, which will include an evaluation of the faculty member’s center activities provided by the center director . A research center director will report to the Vice President for Research, whose input to the director’s annual review is the percent allocated to the research center. The annual review process for joint appointments shall include a conversation among the two units’ primary review administrators and the faculty member to review the allocation agreement and

decide whether to renew or modify the agreement, subject to approval by relevant deans, Vice President of Research, and Provost.

#### Promotion and Tenure Reviews:

Promotion and tenure (P&T) review committees for faculty jointly appointed to two departments will be formed with percentage representation from each department aligned with percentage allocation to each department. To accomplish this, within each department, elections or appointments to P&T committees will take place in accordance with each unit's Roles, Scope, Criteria, Standards and Procedures documents; a relevant subset of each of those department committees will form the review committee for the jointly appointed faculty. We advocate that the P&T review process for faculty jointly appointed to a department and a center should be initiated by the department and include significant input from the center, including providing potential external referees and a letter of evaluation of the candidate that will become part of the dossier that advances to the Dean(s) and Provost. The P&T committees of jointly appointed faculty will include, if possible, members with prior experience in joint appointments and understanding of the responsibilities associated with the home department and with the center or secondary department. The committee reviews, in addition to addressing appropriate elements of the Roles, Scope, Criteria, Standards, and Procedures documents, will specifically describe the strengths and weaknesses brought by the faculty member in promoting interdisciplinary research, teaching, and/or service and outreach.

#### Salary and Grant Indirect Costs Arrangements

Funding for adjuncts to provide department teaching resources decreased by a joint appointment will need to be addressed by the faculty member's department head, dean, and/or Provost. A faculty member jointly appointed to two departments will receive salary from each department according to the percent allocation specified in the hiring agreement. Indirect costs (IDCs) from grants awarded to a jointly appointed faculty member will be credited proportionally to the departments in alignment with the percent allocation and cost considerations for administrative responsibilities assumed by the home department as specified in the hiring agreement. A faculty member's joint appointment to a center represents a boon to the home department through increased faculty research productivity, increased grant activities, and increased likelihood of faculty satisfaction and retention. While it is possible for centers to pay salary to a faculty member carrying directorship or other significant responsibilities, unless specified otherwise in the joint-appointment hiring agreement, the salary of a faculty member jointly appointed to a department and a center will be paid by the department. Expenditures and recovered F&A from grants awarded to faculty jointly appointed to a department and a center will be tied to the department. To keep centers viable, center F&A funding will come from the Office of the Vice President of Research; the funding amount will be negotiated following annual review of the center by predetermined review authority that includes the Vice President of Research. This arrangement prevents perceived competition between departments and centers and provides incentive for departments to support faculty participating in centers.