Faculty Senate Committee Report

Committee: Resources and Environment

Date and Time: Tuesday, January 15, 2013, at 3:00 p.m.

Location: Engineering Building 2, Centennial Campus, Room 3110

Issue: Openness of Information in RADAR, The Research
                         Administration Data and Reporting System

Those Present: Committee Members: Wesley Snyder and Ed
                         Funkhouser (Co-Chairs), Rob Rucker, and Lloyd Fleisher.
                         Guests: Faculty Senate Member Mohamed Bourham
                         and Associate Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs
                         Matt Ronning.

The Issue of Concern raised by Senator Mohamed Bourham came from his junior colleagues in the College of Engineering who are concerned that openness of information in RADAR regarding research grant applications may lead to the pilfering of research ideas.

Matt Ronning reported that some basic information is open and available in RADAR to all including title, a lay abstract, and the period of performance. It is also possible in RADAR to learn who has been viewing the project information. This information is also provided to the UNC Board of Governors who also post it on a web site with access to all. It is also available on LexisNexis and other sites showing Federal grants proposed and funded.   Ronning believes it would be senseless to remove the information from RADAR because it is required to be reported elsewhere and is available openly in so many other places on the WWW.   Ronning said that various details of projects, including proprietary information, need not be included in the lay abstract, and he felt that some instruction for researchers in how to construct a proper but less than all revealing lay abstract might prove helpful. Ronning also believes that the lack of trust among collegaues is a culture issue and must be addressed by Department Heads in departments where this has been a problem. Ronning said he would discuss the issue raised at this meeting with his colleagues in the NCSU Research Office, but he does not believe changing the policy of showing basic proposal information in RADAR is a practical solution.