

Year-End Report

1. Council: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Expression Council

2. Academic Year: 2025-2026

3. Council Members: Chair Nick Hirshon (COHSS), Anna Baiata (OSP), Bhanu Chauhan (COSH), Anita Kumar (COE), Jan Pinkston (Professional Staff Rep), Saeed Shekari (CCOB), Babita Srivastava (Adjunct), David Williams (Library)

4. Council Charges and Summary of Council Activities:

Standing Charges

1. Promote Faculty, Librarian, Professional Staff, and Adjunct Faculty scholarship; identify, on an ongoing basis, current and anticipated faculty, librarian, professional staff and adjunct faculty needs with regard to scholarship and research and recommend strategies designed to meet those needs.

The Council's primary work toward this charge this year was the development of a faculty research needs survey. Council member Saeed Shekari drafted the survey, the Council revised the draft during a November 14 meeting, and Chair Nick Hirshon submitted the finalized survey to Faculty Senate Vice Chair David Snyder on November 14 for distribution to all faculty. Council Chair Hirshon followed up on February 27, and Senate Vice Chair Snyder wrote that he did not recall what the Senate Executive Committee had decided about distribution. The Council awaits further guidance.

The Council also identified the need for a faculty research resource guide—a centralized overview of university-wide supports for research, scholarship, and creative expression. Members noted at the October 14 meeting that existing library resources for faculty are focused on teaching rather than research, and agreed this would be a valuable concrete deliverable.

Regarding Explorations: Library Dean Edward Owusu-Ansah assumed ownership of the event and the Library hosted the University Authors Forum/Reception on March 12, with nine faculty presenting. Owusu-Ansah subsequently stated in a Library departmental meeting that the University Authors Forum will be a yearly university event hosted and organized by the library. In response to a March 9 questionnaire from the Faculty Senate Governance and Elections Council, Chair Hirshon submitted RSCE's formal feedback on March 15, advocating for the removal of Explorations from the Council's charges and calling for a broader university conversation about future support structures.

2. Support the continued efforts to build academic research networks on and beyond the William Paterson campus.

The Council discussed the College of Education's existing model of integrating research presentations into all-unit meeting agendas—typically five-minute works-in-progress updates or 10-to-15-minute presentations for fully developed projects. Council member Anita Kumar, who described the model, suggested that Council members bring it to their own colleges through department chairs and all-unit meetings as a low-overhead approach to cross-college research sharing. At the March 13 meeting, the Council agreed that decentralized, college-based models of this kind represent the most sustainable path forward, and recommended reporting that view to

the Faculty Senate through this year-end report rather than committing to a centralized structure the Council cannot deliver.

3. Review, yearly and as needed, the policies, procedures, and guidelines for each of the following:

- a. Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects,*
- b. Scientific and Academic Fraud and Misconduct,*
- c. Assigned Research Time Application and Selection.*

At the September 18 meeting with Faculty Senate Vice Chair Snyder, the Council discussed possible revisions to this charge, including removing the word “yearly” and updating the policy title from “Scientific and Academic Fraud and Misconduct” to “Research Misconduct.” No formal revisions were adopted, and no further Senate guidance was received.

At the March 13 meeting, Council member Anna Baiata clarified that RSCE’s role in reviewing these policies is to assess them for fairness, clarity, and possible overreach—not to adjudicate complaints—and shared the draft research misconduct policy with the Council. Members agreed this charge should remain active and that the Council should engage with these policies more substantively in 2026–2027. Chair Hirshon also noted that ART is active again and that the Provost recently announced 30 faculty received ART in the most recent cycle.

Priority Charges

1. Assess faculty research needs and report findings to the Faculty Senate.

The development and attempted distribution of the faculty research needs survey, described under Standing Charge 1, represents the Council’s primary work toward this charge. The survey awaits distribution by the Faculty Senate. The Council’s experience with this charge also reflects a broader communication problem: Chair Hirshon’s inquiries to the Senate regarding Explorations went unanswered from July 2025 onward, and the survey distribution request submitted in November 2025 remained unresolved as of May 2026. In his March 15 submission to the Governance and Elections Council, Chair Hirshon identified this as a barrier to RSCE’s ability to fulfill its charges. Governance and Elections Council co-chair Gary Marks noted in a March 2026 reply that difficulty obtaining timely responses from the Senate Executive Committee is not unique to RSCE. The Council hopes the Faculty Senate will distribute the survey in 2026–2027.

2. Collaborate with colleges, departments, Cheng Library, and the Office of Sponsored Programs to publicize student research and faculty grant activity through events such as Explorations, the University Author Reception, and Honors Research Week.

The Council tracked Explorations’ transition throughout the year. Questions about program ownership had gone unanswered by the Faculty Senate since July 2025. Library Dean Owusu-Ansah eventually assumed ownership and formalized the University Authors Forum as a yearly Library-organized event. OSP no longer has capacity to support such programming, and the Honors College will continue requiring student research presentations independently of Explorations. The Council recommends formally removing Explorations from its charges, as the Library has established clear ownership and the Council has no operational role in the event.

3. Consult the Faculty Senate to determine whether the Council’s standing charges should continue to include review of policies, procedures, and guidelines related to the Institutional

Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects and Scientific and Academic Fraud and Misconduct.

No formal guidance was received from the Faculty Senate on this charge. At the March 13 meeting, the Council determined—based on Baiata’s input—that the review serves a genuine faculty protection function and should continue. The Council recommends a charge for 2026–2027 to begin active review of the IRB and Research Misconduct policies.

4. Investigate the feasibility of awarding Pioneer Life badges from the Office of Campus Activities, Service & Leadership to students who present at Explorations and write a three-paragraph reflection describing how they participated and what they learned.

At the March 13 meeting, the Council noted that students were already checking in for Pioneer Life badge credit at the March 12 University Authors Forum/Reception, with Gary Marks handling the Library Learn and Pioneer Life badge activity. Given that Explorations is no longer overseen by RSCE, the Council recommends the Faculty Senate retire this charge.

5. Liaise with OSP to review and offer feedback on Cayuse.

At the March 13 meeting, Baiata updated the Council on Cayuse’s full capabilities, including training records, IRB material, financial conflict disclosures, and proposal workspaces. She noted that all university employees already have Cayuse profiles through Workday data feeds, and that OSP offers training sessions and a video on its website. The Council identified an opportunity to help publicize Cayuse’s reporting tools, which allow department chairs to view funded research activity within their units, but which have not been widely communicated.

5. Recommended Charges for the next Academic Year:

- Collaborate with Faculty Senate leadership to distribute the faculty research needs survey and report findings.
- Develop a faculty research resource guide identifying university-wide supports for research, scholarship, and creative expression, in consultation with OSP, the Library, and relevant academic offices.
- Begin active review of the IRB and Research Misconduct policies for fairness, clarity, and due-process language.
- Support OSP’s communication and training efforts around Cayuse, particularly by helping publicize faculty access to the system’s reporting tools.

6. Charges Recommended for Removal or Amendment:

- Research Misconduct Policy (Standing Charge 3): Replace “Scientific and Academic Fraud and Misconduct” with “Research Misconduct” and remove the word “yearly.”
- Explorations (Priority Charge 2 and Standing Charge 1): The Library has assumed ownership of the University Authors Forum as a yearly event. OSP no longer has capacity to support Explorations. The Council has no operational role. This charge should be formally removed from RSCE’s responsibilities.
- Pioneer Life badge charge (Priority Charge 4): The Library is already administering student badge activity tied to the University Authors Forum. This charge should be retired.