

Year-End Report

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

2. **Academic Year:** 2023-2024

3. **Council Members:** Chair Nick Hirshon (COHSS), Alison Dobrick (COE), Anthony Mayo (OSP), Jill Nocella (COSH), Jan Pinkston (Professional Staff Rep), Babita Srivastava (CCOB), 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 held discussions on February 9 on the development of GrantsForward, a database and search engine that connects faculty to grant opportunities, as well as Research Sprints, a program through which librarians help faculty get off to a “sprint” during the early stages of a project.

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

The 2023-2024 academic year marked a shift in the administration of Explorations, the series of spring presentations where faculty and students discuss their research, scholarship, and creative expression. As in previous years, RSCE Council members from each college conferred with their deans to determine the presentation modalities and schedules and recruited faculty to present. However, the Office of Sponsored Programs unexpectedly withdrew from its management of Explorations, one of the main forums for developing academic research networks on campus.

In the past, OSP provided critical support for Explorations. Research Council representatives would send OSP their colleges’ preferred presentation timeslots and modalities, and OSP would book spaces on campus. OSP also booked spaces for student poster sessions. Additionally, OSP contacted faculty in the Art Department to involve their students in creating prospective logos for Explorations, and OSP coordinated Research Council discussions to choose the logo. OSP also printed posters with the logo to promote Explorations.

This year, OSP director Anthony Mayo informed the Council that OSP would no longer play a role in Explorations. OSP did not provide the opportunity before this announcement for Council members to discuss this change. OSP’s lack of involvement increased the workload on Council members and created confusion among faculty. At one point, OSP updated [the Explorations website](#) with a note: “Explorations 2024 is coming! Look out for more information on this page soon.” No additional information was ever posted. All that appeared on the site, at the behest of Research Council Chair Nick Hirshon, were the names and emails of the Council representatives

from each college, so faculty knew whom to contact in OSP's absence.

The Research Council is disappointed in OSP's decision to withdraw from Explorations. Council members remain willing to support Explorations. However, we hope that OSP will reconsider its decision to abandon Explorations or seek a replacement office, such as the Provost's, to ensure uniformity and clarity in the 2024-2025 academic year. The Council would like to know if the Faculty Senate could ask the administration how it intends to support Explorations amid OSP's departure and other organizational and structural changes at the university.

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.*

During the 2022-2023 academic year, Senate Governance Council Chair Gary Marks asked our Council to reflect on this charge. We agreed that Point 3C, relating to Assigned Research Time, should be eliminated since ART is negotiated by the Union and not under the Council's purview. Council members also said they could not recall instances when the Senate advised the Council to review Institutional Review Board procedures or policies for Scientific and Academic Fraud and Misconduct. Marks said the Faculty Senate would release a report that would clarify Council members' obligations. Our Council awaits clarification from the Faculty Senate on this charge.

Additional Charges

1) Collaborate with the Center for Teaching Excellence to organize a panel discussion on high-impact practices to incorporate research into courses.

The Research Council collaborated on a panel discussion with the Center for Teaching Excellence on April 4. Three faculty members discussed high-impact practices to incorporate research into courses: Professor Payton MacDonald on students working with artificial intelligence to write an opera, Professor Ali Mir on decolonizing management education through the Black radical tradition, and Professor Chris Salerno on fostering artificial intelligence literacy in writing courses. Research Council Chair Nick Hirshon booked the space, arranged audiovisual support, recruited panelists, and provided introductory remarks, while Center for Teaching Excellence director Elizabeth Brown ordered food and moderated the discussion. Faculty Senate Chair Wendy Christensen was among the attendees.

2. Investigate the feasibility of awarding Pioneer Life badges from the Office of Campus Activities, Service & Leadership to students who complete research projects.

The Research Council discussed the potential to reward students who present at Explorations, and attend the presentations of their peers, with Pioneer Life badges that would be granted only if the students write three-paragraph reflections describing how they participated and what they learned.

3. Determine and report to Senate what research support faculty needs.

As stated earlier, the faculty would benefit from an office such as OSP, IRB, or the Provost overseeing the management of Explorations. This office could create and maintain a centralized website with instructions on how to participate and a list of events as well as oversight over the annual selection of Explorations logos and the production of promotional posters.

4. Liaise with OSP to review and offer feedback on new system (Cayuse).

OSP director Anthony Mayo informed Research Council members at a May 10 meeting that his leave of absence during the 2023-2024 academic year delayed the rollout of Cayuse. Mayo said the original release date of July 1, 2024, has been pushed back to September 1, 2024. OSP plans to organize town halls and virtual training sessions to introduce the WP community to Cayuse.

5. Review and solicit suggestions on Faculty Research and Grant Incentive Program.

The Research Council would appreciate clarification on its responsibilities relating to this charge.

- 1) Identify strategies to encourage and recognize undergraduate research, including methods that William Paterson's peer and aspirational universities have employed.*
- 2) Discuss whether the Honors College's student research pilot program, including a one-credit project, could be expanded to more or all William Paterson students.*
- 3) Advise the new Director of the OSP with regard to recommendations and strategies to meet research needs on campus.*

OSP director Anthony Mayo took a leave of absence that limited his participation in Research Council discussions this academic year. At a meeting on May 10, Council members discussed OSP's divestiture from Explorations. Mayo replied that the Provost and Associate Provost made the decision to leave responsibility for Explorations to the colleges, apparently via the Research Council representatives. Mayo also said that Explorations did not fit into OSP's primary mission of securing grants. However, OSP's website states a broader mission "to provide value-added assistance to encourage, develop, and support the research, scholarship, education, creative, and community service aspirations of William Paterson University's faculty, staff, and students." The Council looks forward to further discussions on Explorations in the 2024-2025 academic year.

5. Recommended Charges for the next Academic Year:

- 1) Collaborate with the Provost's Office and/or the Office of Sponsored Programs to create and promote a website for Explorations that clearly states the mission and dates of the annual symposium and identifies the RSCE Council members in charge of scheduling presentations for each college.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Liaise with OSP to review and offer feedback on Cayuse.