

PSU Faculty Senate
January 7, 2013
Update on Research and Strategic Partnerships
Vice-President RSP J. Fink

I provided updates on two meetings that took place since the last Senate session, each of which reflected a message I feel is worth bringing to the Senate's attention.

1. PSU-OHSU Implementation Committee: This group of senior administrators from both universities meets at least quarterly to work through issues associated with strengthening education and research partnerships between our two institutions. Topics fall under the headings of teaching, research, administration, economic development, and philanthropy. At the latest meeting (and at another followup session involving relevant department chairs, associate deans, and senior faculty) there was considerable discussion about how PSU would use its space within the Collaborative Life Science Building in South Waterfront. PSU has sufficient space allocation (around 6,700 gross square feet) for a research group working on topics that complement OHSU's research presence in the building, mainly genomics and bioinformatics leader Joe Gray. However, there is also another 13,300 gross square feet available for "collaborative" projects that could involve PSU, OHSU, and OSU. Space in the CLSB is expensive, so we will not bid on space that we can't pay for through gifts or indirect costs from grants. The discussions focused on how unique an opportunity this represents for all three universities, but particularly PSU, given that the quality of the research space will be higher than any other space on our campus.

The reason to bring this to the attention of the Senate is because it signals that PSU's partnership with OHSU is becoming more tangible and serious. This represents one of PSU's greatest opportunities to advance as an urban-serving research university, and it's one that we are actively seeking to take advantage of.

2. Research Advisory Committee (RAC). The Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships has a Research Advisory Committee of about 35 faculty and administrators that meets monthly to talk about issues of relevance to our most research-active faculty members. At the last meeting we had a very rich discussion of the committee members' perceptions of barriers to PSU becoming a place in which research is taken seriously and is supported at a level comparable to our teaching mission. The consensus was that we have been making good progress in improving administrative services provided to research-active faculty. What we lack, however, is a more clear vision of the kind of institution PSU aspires to be in the next decade, not just what it is today. Such statements are needed in order to prioritize funding and hiring decisions, and to better motivate and excite potential donors and philanthropic foundations--the latter will be more likely to invest in PSU if they believe we have a compelling story about the kind of institution we want to become. Along these lines, the committee urged PSU's administration to include research excellence, not just scholarships, as a main focus of the upcoming philanthropic campaign.