

March 11, 2013

Memo to: Joel Baker, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Research at UWT,

From: Executive Council of the Faculty Assembly

On February 5, 2013 you distributed a memo to UWT faculty concerning the eligibility of faculty and staff to be Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Director (PD) on external grants. In a subsequent memo to Faculty Assembly Chair Katie Baird, you solicited faculty input on the proposed policy. This memo is our response to that request.

Foremost, we recognize the importance of your efforts as well as those of others involved to craft policy on PI/PD eligibility. The UW Tacoma policy described in the memo is similar to the policies in other schools and colleges at UW Seattle. We also recognize the importance of being careful who can be PI on a grant because administratively speaking, grants awarded to a PI are awarded to the university and not to an individual or group of individuals.

We do have a few comments about the policy that we would like to share with you. For one, the memo states that PI status on an external grant has the same requirements as co-PI status; those co-PIs seeking an exemption from the policy need to go through the same process as that for PI. It seems reasonable to us that the requirements for co-PI-ship should be less stringent than those for PI-ship, and we recommend that this be reflected in policy.

A second and more important issue is future faculty-administration collaboration on revisions to the policy. We believe the policy and criteria laid out in your memo represent a good start since there has been no formal policy at UW Tacoma before. With experience, UWT may decide that the criteria listed in the memo that the Chancellor uses to decide PI-ship and co-PI-ship needs revisiting. With that in mind, we request adding to the policy a statement about how and when the PI policy will be re-examined, and that faculty input will be sought before any amendments are made to the policy. We suggest that there be a review date, say of 12-31-2014, with an understanding that sometime before that date you solicit faculty input so that we can provide suggestions about any modifications we might recommend to the policy, with such input formally channeled through Faculty Assembly's Executive Council.