NOTES FROM GROUPS FOCUSED ON 6-UNIT RSCA

**Group 1:**

Things that could go wrong:

Eligible projects may not be funded?

If fewer faculty are funded, I don’t like that idea.

Humanities researchers…my research doesn’t lend itself toward grants. Humanities may be disadvantaged. And newer faculty may be most in that position unless coming in with a book contract.

I don’t think you can justify six units if it means that another project won’t get funded. We could all benefit from six units. No one project is more important than another. If you were in an administrative position, need the six units to get back on track.

Should just be a 3/3 load. There are faculty who work with colleagues in other universities so you look more productive. As a co-PI you didn’t necessarily contribute to the project.

Reminds me of student loan forgiveness…hoping that not everyone eligible will apply. Some people doing research but not applying.

We can fund 120 3-unit proposals, I’m okay with funding 6-units, If funding is available. As long as no one loses. But if we have a precedent, then it just keeps happening. And that is not a good precedent.

Anthro projects might take 3-4 years to produce something. But working even if not publishing.

Would rather fund more people and figure out a way to move us toward a 3/3 workload. So take the competitive aspect out of the process.

If lower on the rankings, could lose. I was afraid to write a book bc it takes time. A book in some departments is worth two articles. If evaluated annually, it is dangerous to take on a book. Safer to write a journal and show you are productive. Younger scholars are on the clock. 3/3 is still a heavy load.

RSCA wants to make sure you can complete the project in 3 units of time. Can be literature review or major project. Such a range of who would deserve to get 6 units. The problem is, who do you prioritize. I would caution: different types of research produce different types of output.

EQUITY

Have to understand what it means to be equitable. But if the RSCA committee reserved X number of 6 unit awards for faculty in their 4-5 years to make progress toward tenure.

To understand what is exceptional productivity in different disciplines. And even sub-disciplines, like ethnographer v. lab in anthropology. POC scholars may be less likely to be considered and access has to be considered with DEI.

Disproportionate funding has always existed.

**Group 2:**

Hi Gwen, here are the notes from our discussion. Our answers to the questions all blurred together so excuse this being 1 giant paragraph!

Is it even possible to differentiate who gets a 3- vs. 6-unit course release?

Different disciplines are so different it’s hard to measure against the differences. HOURS might be an option, but hours/time is subjective and can disadvantage faculty who take longer to think through issues or accomplish a task (neurocognitive norms, essentially these could be ableist categories of measurement). Perhaps “output” or quantity of work could be a better measurement: e.g. 1 article vs. 1 book manuscript (the former is 3-units, the latter 6-units). Or how much “output” is left to do: person with less data collected gets 6, person with more data already gets 3. Perhaps it could be a combination of estimated time it would take to complete the project and how much is to be done. Importantly, we need to think about EQUITY. What if faculty has more privilege (research help, time, etc.), then they will be more “done” than other faculty with less privilege (and thus must exercise more labor). Could be unfair that they then are favored for having more work done (which looks like more LABOR). Impact of research could be a category too—the project that is going to make the most impact will get 6-units. We realize this can also be tricky—who dictates what is “important” or what communities/issues are important for impact-factor. Right now it doesn’t matter if you have received a RSCA in the past. Perhaps this needs to be implemented? We don’t think we should do 6-units RSCAs because it creates more stratification (so unless we have MORE money we should just keep it the way it is). We shouldn’t implement it if it takes away opportunity. In short, it’s better to spread the wealth with 3-unit RSCAs. Perhaps if there is some extra money leftover we can fund something else faculty related i.e. supporting JUNIOR FACULTY (or fund a 6-unit RSCA project — for a project that addresses impact/equity/etc. But this would be if we had extra money and the committee would have to convene over it). In other words, faculty apply for 3-unit RSCA and include a part in the application for “if this were a 6-unit RSCA, fund me because XYZ)”. Overall we don’t think the 6-unit RSCA is very equitable: it’s too divisive/may negatively impact junior faculty. We think everyone should get a 3-unit RSCA.

On lecturers: if they are producing research they should be allowed to apply.

**Group 3:**

This statement was collectively produced by faculty present at a small group discussion during the Faculty Council Town Hall on December 7, 2022. We unanimously agreed that the proposal to create a pilot program of approximately 20, 6-unit RSCA assigned time awards contravenes the principle and practice of equity as centered in the CLA Strategic Plan that the Faculty Council approved in Spring 2022.

We recognize that additional financial investment will not be available for the pilot program. Without additional financial investment, the outcome of this proposal will be fundamentally inequitable for the following reasons:

1. Fewer faculty will have access to assigned time for research, failing to address concerns about workload that the Strategic Plan raises and faculty calls for greater research support;
2. Such a policy would further devalue the humanities, ethnic studies, gender studies, and other disciplines that have historically and institutionally been undervalued and underfunded. The implementation of the 6-unit RSCA proposal would almost certainly exacerbate a more generalized disciplinary equity problem that exists on and beyond this campus. This is especially true considering the bias in evaluation and eligibility criteria that exist in the current RSCA policy. If the same or a larger number of applicants are competing for fewer RSCA AT awards because of the 6-unit RSCA category, that means the criteria for all will become more stringent. It is difficult to create criteria for the diverse set of disciplines and research agendas within CLA. Attempts to create more stringent criteria for RSCA often lead to the privileging the social sciences because such research is often more easily quantifiable. Traditional social science criteria cannot easily contend with research designs, epistemological frames, and/or theoretical positions from the humanities and other undervalued areas of research. This may require those whose projects do not fit traditional social science designs to stretch, change, alter, or attempt to fit a categorization that would otherwise not be suitable to their projects, forcing them to expend labor that is superfluous to their ongoing research agenda.
3. Awarding 6-units of assigned time to a limited and select number of faculty will further disadvantage faculty who do not have ample time and are not being compensated to usher research to publication;
4. Currently, tenured and tenure-track faculty are evaluated on research but are not compensated for research (except for those in their first three years on the TT and those receiving RSCA AT). Unfortunately, this means that faculty are not being paid for a part of their job that is crucial in RTP reviews.

We concluded that the principle and practice of equity, as centered in the CLA Strategic Plan, requires a financial investment. The lack of additional investment in faculty research subverts institutional accountability to equity. Thus, we unanimously agreed that we do not support the 6-Unit RSCA Proposal.

**Group 4:**

TownHall Meeting Notes

RSCA Topic –

* Where did this come from? From the dean’s office.
* What is the argument for 6 units?
  + A lot of projects are not 1 semester projects – multi semester projects.
  + Could reward a year long project.
  + Many people do not follow through on projects. – see that in 5 year history.
  + How about the committee have the power to look back on old projects – same projects over and over again.
  + When it gets more competitive applications will get stronger.
* Issues with offering the 6 units:
  + 6 units without increasing funds is a problem
  + May fuel issues between departments
  + What is the purpose of the 6 units? To incentivize people who are struggling to get research done? To reward productive faculty? Workload issue? Unclear.
  + May hurt certain groups of faculty
  + Would cause a lot of conflict in the college
* Questions & Comments:
  + Want to understand how the funds are allocated.
  + Where does the 7-8 million dollar estimate come from for 3/3?
  + Could full time lecturers apply? How would that affect availability of RSCA?
  + Other institutions have reduced sabbatical and increased class size.
  + Could we separate faculty small grant and assigned time? (ability to apply for both)
  + For the pilot – would it just be the 20 top rated proposals?