**SOSA Committee**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2015, 1:30pm**

**Loser Room 116**

**Present:** Bennett (minutes), Bush-Wallace (Chair), Cathell, Kirnan, Papamichail, Sen, Vandegrift, Van der Heijden

1. Minutes from February 04, 2015 meeting were approved.
2. Discussion/update:
   1. J B-W mentioned that a meeting that had been scheduled (on Feb 17) for some committee members [J B-W, TB and IZ] to discuss with Brad Stober (from IT) possible enhanced capabilities for processing applications within VIBE had to be postponed.
   2. J B-W also mentioned that some applicants noted that they received their decision letter (via email) earlier (or later) than their colleagues. This resulted in speculation that awardees were being notified according to rank order (based on final scores). [This is not true; the order in which Academic Affairs notifies candidates is random.] Perhaps this perception can be overcome if the process for sending notification messages is supported within VIBE.
   3. A committee member asked how to respond to colleagues’ requests from unsuccessful applicants for additional feedback from committee members. All were reminded that committee members should not provide feedback to individual applicants (or offer to review applications prior to submission). In previous years, unsuccessful applicants were offered the option to meet with the Provost’s Representative on the SOSA committee; however, this year’s letters to unsuccessful applicants did not offer that option.
   4. It was suggested that perhaps the SOSA website could include a link to an exemplary successful application – perhaps with annotations that highlighted how this application was aligned with the requirements of the RFP. It was noted that, as RFPs are subject to change, it would have to be made clear that this exemplary application was aligned with the RFP that was in place at the time, not necessarily with the most current RFP. A lively discussion ensued.
3. Continuation of review of 2015-2017 SOSA RFP: The committee continued its discussion [begun during the meeting of February 4, 2015] of suggested changes to bring forward to CFA to assist in its (CFA’s) upcoming substantive review of the SOSA application and evaluation process. Highlights included:
   1. A draft document that reflected a revised, streamlined RFP that focused on the application requirements [including an “Instructions to submit” box, offset and highlighted] and the application. This revised RFP would refer to supplementary information – formerly included in the RFP – that would now reside on the SOSA website. This includes:
      1. language concerning the mission and principles behind SOSA; and
      2. the composition and processes of the SOSA committee.
   2. A draft revised scoring rubric, streamlined to reflect:
      1. fewer categories for evaluation (eliminating some overlap in the former version);
      2. a more compressed range of scores for each category [i.e., a zero-through-four scoring range rather than zero-through-seven]; and, therefore
      3. fewer total possible points [24 (plus 2 for pre-tenure status or re-engagement in scholarship) rather than 63 (plus 2)]. It was noted that these revisions did not change the balance of the scoring insofar as two-thirds of the overall score reflects an assessment of the proposal, and one-third reflects an assessment of the applicant’s qualifications and scholarly record.
   3. Additional modifications to the text in the RFP were suggested to more closely align the evaluation rubric with the application requirements, and to make it clear that it is the applicant’s responsibility to motivate the research question (that is, to make a compelling case for why this scholarship merits funding from SOSA).

A lively discussion ensued.

**Action item:** J B-W will further revise the RFP and evaluation rubric for review and discussion at the next committee meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50pm