

***Research Funding Streams and the University Mission***  
**Report of an ad hoc working group of the Research Advisory  
 Board, Office of the Vice President for Research**

Submitted by Sue Alcock (RAB/JIAAW), on behalf of RAB and OVPR members:  
 Julianne Hanavan (OVPR); Thomas Powers (RAB); Kathleen Shannon (OVPR)

*Other members:*

Keith Brown (Watson Institute/ Anthropology)

Mary Hanifin (Corporate and Foundation Relations)

Norman Hebert (Office of Sponsored Projects)

Catherine Lutz (Anthropology/Watson Institute)

Catherine Nellis (Corporate and Foundation Relations)

Sarah Sharpe (Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World)

Harrison Stark (Class of 2011; Archaeology concentrator)

***The point of this working group is to explore current practice (at Brown and elsewhere) on seeking, screening and accepting research funding from (potentially) problematic sources. What questions should be asked? What standards should be set? Where should these dialogues take place? What policies might Brown choose to implement? (from the working group 'mission statement')***

From the beginning, this working group pursued a goal, and an organizational course, somewhat different from the others. The original conception was to explore the relationship of research funding streams and various ethical concerns, first and foremost the vexed issue of military funding. The original intention was perhaps to come up with some policy recommendations, since it was not initially clear what rubrics Brown had in place to govern behavior in this area. Over the course of the fall term 2008, the committee was gradually

assembled, and an undergraduate, Harrison Stark, began a wiki site to collect and synthesize current relevant scholarly and journalistic literature (see: <http://proteus.brown.edu/researchfundingstreams/Home>).

Over the course of that same term, and after a few lunchtime meetings, our ambitions somewhat shifted. It was decided that what was truly at stake here was the question of research funding and the University's mission at large (not simply the matter of the ethics of military or defense funding, though that remains a high priority for discussion). And rather than evolving specific policy markers, beyond those already in place, it was agreed that facilitating open analysis and debate of these issues, in a variety of fora, should be the working group's goal.

To that end, the Office of the Vice President of Research co-sponsored a public panel, 'Scholarship in a Time of War: Universities, Associations and the Responsibilities of Citizenship' in February 2009. Other sponsors included the Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies, the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, and the American Anthropological Association; Clyde Briant chaired the session ([http://www.watsoninstitute.org/events\\_detail.cfm?id=1293](http://www.watsoninstitute.org/events_detail.cfm?id=1293)). This event 'piggybacked' on a visit of the American Anthropological Society's Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC), a leading voice on the interrelationship of the academy and the military. About 50 people attended; video of the event is currently displayed online through the Watson Institute.

Several undergraduates attended this session, and an attempt was made to organize another undergraduate event around this array of issues through the Janus Forum (part of the Political Theory Project); this is a campus initiative to

encourage, facilitate, and develop active thought, debate, and discussion around political ideas at Brown. The Janus organizers expressed interest but were 'booked up' for this year; this topic is on the docket for their attention in the fall. Sheila Bonde at the Graduate School has also evinced interest in sponsoring or co-sponsoring a graduate session, through the 'Academy in Context' program they are currently running, but – again – that had to wait for the next academic year. Finally, while not formally co-sponsored by OVPR, a workshop considering 'What Follows Area Studies?' was held in April 2009, which grew in part out of this working group's discussions.

While the working group had hoped to get more 'things done' in 2008-2009, our conversations established several possible modes for forward progress. Apart from those already mentioned, they include: the creation of a list of relevant courses of which students should be aware and the encouragement of new offerings dealing with these core issues; the promotion of more general awareness that Brown actually has 'a mission', and what that means in relation to that of our peers; and the involvement of Brown faculty with other associations complicit in these matters (Alcock, for example, has been invited to organize a session on academic engagement with the military for the Archaeological Institute of America's annual meetings). Most important, however, is the establishment of Brown University as a place where these often fraught and difficult, but quite necessary, conversations can take place. It is our strong impression that such open discussions are not tending to happen, as they must and should, and that Brown can here provide a model for other institutions to follow.

At this juncture, we would ask the Research Advisory Board to consider the following:

- 1) Should this initiative continue, perhaps in the first instance continuing with its focus on military and defense funding, but in future semesters/years branching into discussion of the University's mission in relation to other spheres, such as funding streams behind brain science or climate change?
  
- 2) Is a Research Advisory Board working group the best means to organize and sustain the program? If not, where and how should it be housed and fostered?
  
- 3) How involved does the Office of the Vice President for Research want to be in this kind of endeavor: organizing, in various venues, the discussion of issues related to funding and the University mission? What institutional support or financial backing is OVPR willing to give?