

Summary of the Research Committee's Activities for 2009-2010

Membership

- Ran Libeskind-Hadas, David Coons, Chang Tan, Tony Bright, and Zach Dodds

Meeting Dates

- Fall '09: September 30, October 21; Spring '10: January 22, February 26

Presentations to the Faculty:

- October 29, 2009

This presentation was designed to be an overview of the HMC-internal call for research proposals for summer 2010. We described the different sources of available funding for those proposals and the constraints they impose. A question and answer period followed, from which emerged a request to provide more consistent feedback.

Items Discussed and Action Taken during the Year

1. The committee agreed on a plan for handling the HMC-internal research proposals for the summer of 2010. 16 positions, eight each funded by the Rose Hills Foundation and the Baker Foundation, would be available. The awards would total \$6,000, enough to provide the HMC-recommended stipend to a student, overhead, and \$1,000 of discretionary funds for the advisor and student together.
2. The committee created a rubric for judging those proposals and made it public on its website <http://www.cs.hmc.edu/~dodds/rcomm/>
In addition, complete guidelines for the preparation and submission of HMC-internal research proposals were drafted, vetted, and released at that site. As noted above, the highlights were presented at the HMC faculty meeting of 10/29/2010.
3. The committee evaluated and made recommendations to the Dean of Faculty one week after the first deadline (Jan. 22, 2010). At that time only eight of the 16 possible student slots had been accounted for. The committee considered several alternatives. In the end – and in consultation with the dean of faculty – the committee opted to run another call for proposals in order to allocate the other eight.
4. The committee repeated the process of evaluating and making recommendations to the DOF by the end of the week following that second deadline (February 26, 2010). We were disappointed that one proposal could not be funded in this second call for proposals: there had been 9 submissions for eight available spots.
5. Looking ahead to 2010-2011, the group agreed to redouble its efforts to encourage proposers to creatively and carefully consider two particular facets of their HMC-internal proposals: (1) how their work can connect back to HMC's curriculum in positive ways and (2) the overall quality of the summer research experience for the student involved. The committee did not feel that this years proposals fared poorly with respect to these criteria. We did feel, however, that these two criteria offered the greatest room for further improvement.