After discussion, no member volunteered to be nominated for committee chair and the committee agreed to meet without a chair for AY19-20. Associate dean Krueger noted that this was not uncommon but that he hoped next year the committee would have a chairperson. We met face to face on a monthly basis until the Covid emergency shut down the university mid-spring and we all turned our attention to converting classes to a remote environment.

In the fall semester, our core task involved reviewing last year’s detailed recommendations from the committee. Associate dean Krueger followed up with Dean Riley. Two new initiatives resulted from the previous recommendations: 1) a new summer funded research, scholarship and creative works program for assistant professors. The program will support work on projects by select assistant professors in the summer with the stipulation that they would not teach. Regrettably, the program was tabled for at least a year in April given the new budget constraints. It is the hope that the college will bring the program back. Additionally, the idea is to eventually extend the program to associate and full ranks. This program is new and announced late fall 2019; feedback was given that in the future this program should ideally be completed prior to requests for summer teaching. This way faculty will know their summer funding status and chairs won’t scramble to cover instructors pulling out from summer teaching. 2) The college increased the A&S funding for professional travel in AY19-20. Members of the committee note that travel continues to be a priority area for funding. Each of these programs connected directly with key requests from the previous year.

In the spring the committee met with Taylor Schwalbach, Senior Director of Development in the College of Arts and Sciences and a representative from the URI Foundation to explore ways to leverage micro-funding to support faculty projects. All noted it was an interesting and productive meeting but many details required ironing out. Committee member Bridget Buxton agree to follow up and see about a pilot for her work that might be expanded in the next year or two to the wider college. The committee hopes to again pick this up again next year to see how this may work into faculty research scholarship and creative work support.

The well-known A&S Fellows Program applications run through the Research, Scholarship and Creative Works Committee. The RFP was announced at the start of the spring semester but was pulled back prior to the application due date because of summer Covid and budgetary concerns. As such, one of the key tasks of the committee, to review applications and select A&S Fellows, was cancelled. This is an initiative we hope to bring it back to the college and committee next year.

Looking ahead there will be major changes made to applying for sponsored research, with the elimination of the CAYUSE system. The committee will likely play a role in addressing this change.