Office of Research

Listening Session #1
Group Responses

Held On

October 23, 2012
UT Conference Center
600 Henley Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

Invited Groups
Upper Administration
Centers & Institutes Directors
Deans
Associate Deans
Office of Research Staff
E1: How can the Office of Research help expand and support excellence in scholarship?

**Group 2**
- Eliminate silos, isolation, fragmentation
  - Interdisciplinary scholarships
- Make multi-campus proposals easier
- Corporate collaborations
- Resource exploitations-medical center
- Support faculty and staff more broadly
  - Language institute, retention
  - Tech transfer more available and understandable

**Group 3**
- Revisit: does scholarship = funding? No, but…
- Be proactive in searching out RFPs; not enough notice;
  - Targeted funding NOT by filter
- UTSI: promote faculty engagement; i.e., join ListSrvs; need to be more inclusive: revamp ListSrvs
- Provide more seed money
- Reinvestment
  - Topic of control over F&A
- Professional development awards
- Provide competitive graduate research scholarships/stipends

**Group 4**
- Publishing in high-impact inter-disciplinary journals (Science, Nature Journals, PNAS, etc.)
  - Often necessitates a different approach to manuscript preparation.

**Group 5**
- Expand Quest
- Promote the Scholar of the week in different ways beyond Quest
- National Recognition of Faculty - Continue and provide additional support

**Group 6**
- OR and Graduate School could develop a training program that will help grad students and post-docs conduct research projects and scholarly activities.
- OR or colleges could provide additional proposal development resources to reduce the time PIs must devote to administrative issues.

**Group 7**
- Seek outside funds to support
- Better educate faculty about the role of the Office of Research (i.e., support related to grant writing, funding resources)
- Increase networking nationally

**Group 8**
- Mentorship programs for junior faculty members
- Editorial support across the spectrum – grants to manuscripts. With increasing numbers of international professional staff (including faculty) this becomes a more pressing need.
- Identification of collaborative opportunities that expand and enrich individual scholarship efforts (this was a recurring theme with discussion including the OR research capacity catalog and potential new faculty database software – see E3)
- Identify research strengths and build to these – core facilities/equipment, faculty hires, etc.

**Group 9**
- Enhance Mentoring
  - Staff cross-training
- Communication of expectations to faculty of strategic plan
**Group 2**
- Expand corporate and foundations relations
- Think and act like a business (cannot contract like a state government-red tape, slow)
- Increase awareness of opportunities
- Office of Research and Development work closer together
- Community engagement and outreach
- Service to the community, use retired faculty
- K-12 expansion

**Group 3**
- Align faculty research interests, then take profile to Foundations/Corporations
- Create a model/central message from UT
- Travel to agencies; invite them here
- Office of Research provide corporate/foundation people a tuned portfolio/message of UT capabilities
- Engagement: UTRF coordinated with Office of Research, Office of Development & other campus organizations
- Model NARCO (Marc Gibson)
- UTSI-DoD model of successful partnerships (UTRF)
- “Tie” relationships at executive level (key partners)

**Group 4**
- Host speed-dating events attended by potential corporate sponsors and research faculty.
- Special effort should be exerted to infuse students into these projects.

**Group 5**
- Enhance ability to match faculty research interest with opportunities

**Group 6**: Not addressed

**Group 7**
- Seek standard templates re. university contracts
- Better communication/coordination between UTK internal and UTRF
- Separate initiatives, Corporate & Foundation

**Group 8**
- Better ensure that all interested and relevant faculty members are notified and provided an opportunity to interact/meet with representatives from these entities when they visit campus.
- Expand the OR team(s) to better address opportunities
- Increase interactions between research sponsored programs development groups and individual unit development teams across the UT system, starting on the Knoxville campus.
- Streamline contract review/approval timeline – a business model approach as necessary to attract and retain corporate research investment

**Group 9**
Already identified as needing improvement
- Enhance Communication
- Work more closely with UT Development office
- Staffing issues
  Better coordination with Oak Ridge, UTRF, UTK
E3: How can the Office of Research help expand and support “Big Idea” large strategic initiatives?

Group 2
- Expand and support “Big Idea”
- Know what our resources are
- Breaking down silos - “speed dating”
- Big idea Developer – skills, opportunities, top down and bottom up
- Build on student ideas also
- System-wide sharing of what we are doing and can do
- Focus groups – continual

Group 3
- Spot strategic initiatives early and assemble faculty groups
  - What are the big national opportunities?
- Talk to key partners; listen to feedback
- Can we find “faculty gurus” for general areas?
  - Use aggressive leaders to gather teams

Group 4
- Provide the support for cluster hires.

Group 5
- Help facilitate team building
- Early identification of opportunities
- Infrastructure support – OR to take lead in developing facilitation of large projects.

Group 6
- OR could consider leveraging ORU funds to encourage “big idea” and/or trans-disciplinary research projects.
- OR could sponsor a workshop(s) on how to do “big idea” research projects.
- OR could consider designating a “Big Ideas Coordinator” to:
  - track annual or limited submissions,
  - alert DHs/faculty in advance,
  - facilitate teaming and brainstorming meetings, and
  - coordinate the internal competition process for limited submissions.

Group 7
- Roundtables (topic-specific, event-oriented)
- Develop PI reward/benefit beyond initiative
- Develop incentives (annual reviews, P&T)

Group 8
- When these are initiated at an administrative level make sure that relevant faculty members are well informed and actively engaged in development of the program

Group 9
- Timing is of the essence….need adequate time and resources to put together these complex integrated proposals
- Better define objectives
- Trans-disciplinary approaches are essential
- Better presence in DC to be better informed of things that will happen
- Support and incentives to run multi-disciplinary programs
E4: How can the Office of Research help expand and support trans-disciplinary scholarship?

**Group 2**
- Expand and support trans-disciplinary scholarship
- Avoid stagnation - re-compete centers (get centers to focus on big ideas - look at what funding is coming –trans-disciplinary

**Group 3**
- Old model of hiring faculty does not equal transdisciplinary focus!
  - Still “department-based” hires and rewards
  - Use Governor’s Chair model of hiring/cross-department hires

**Group 4**
- Change the internal culture of F&A / credit / control between departments, colleges, centers and campuses. These can be barriers to collaboration.

**Group 5**
- Provide faculty boundary spanning support for transdisciplinary projects.
- There is always concern as to which department or college will take the lead which also ties into F&A distribution.
- Example: Standard F&A split procedure
- OR could consider leveraging ORU funds to encourage “big idea” and/or trans-disciplinary research projects.

**Group 6**

**Group 7**
- Work with the Provost to facilitate transdisciplinary relationships among deans and department heads

**Group 8**
- Increase interactions and exchange of information
  - System wide between research offices and faculty
  - System-wide research symposium
  - Improve accuracy and quality of content in the research capacity catalog (RCC)
  - UT President put out an edict to increase scholarly interactions across the UT system – knock down silos

**Group 9**
- Incentives
- Impact on P&T especially tenure-track scientists
- Need to change the culture of independent research
E5: How can the Office of Research help grow and support strategic partnerships?

**Group 2**
- Strategic Partnerships
- Corporate
- Medical center
- TVA
- Nurture and maintain ORNL
- Development Foundation and Office of Research work better together
- Government and industry and academia together

**Group 3**
- Look at E2: Define our strengths, gather faculty
- Look at national trends
- Strategic partnerships lead to strategic direction
- Should seed money be invested in defined strategic areas?
- Should the Office of Research be materially involved in strategic initiatives?
- Strategic game plan for budget hearings
- Identify areas to be developed
- Conflict: “how to make all flowers grow…”

**Group 4**
- We also need to define our strengths and then strengthen those strengths to be in a better position to partner with institutions that have complementary strengths.

**Group 5**
- Support development of top down relationships building and encouraging bottom up and ongoing relationships

**Group 6**
- OR could develop financial incentives, or remove financial disincentives, to facilitate collaboration between centers and departments.

**Group 7**
- Maximize alumni opportunities
- Develop a centralized structure with a coordinated effort toward a strategic and targeted PR/image for UTK research

**Group 8**
- Expand strategic reach
- Fix the “lobbyist” relationship
- Think outside the box in finding partnerships between UT and other agencies/groups/companies: ie English History/Vols Teach/Art/Y12 (coming out of the Y12 meeting with UT earlier this year)

**Group 9**
- Types – internal
  - ORNL
  - Y12
  - Other institutions
  - Foundations
  - Corporations
- Minimize business model differences
- Better understanding of what is going on at UT
- What will happen in near future
- Lack of understanding within and between components of the UT System
E6: How can the Office of Research define and support engagement & outreach serving the research and scholarly enterprise?

**Group 1:** Not addressed.

**Group 2**
- Engagement and outreach
- Continuing education, promote lifelong learning
- Use retired faculty
- Engage with local community k-12, use internet more
- Actual service to the community
- University community support - community at large
- More programs like Medical Explorers program at UTMC
- Campus-wide open house to bring the community in

**Group 3**
- There needs to be coordination for those working in engagement
- Office of Research and Office of Development
- Identify who is engaged with community at university level
- Coordinate with foundations
- Establish infrastructure for engagement
- Worry that E. Burman is a term appointment
- UTIA?

**Group 4**
- We could better coordinate the efforts of many of the outreach coordinators on campus.

**Group 5**
- Publicize that Office of Research will provide assistance with Outreach and Engagement. Establishment of campus level initiative for coordination and assistance

- Enhancing Pre-collegiate program and exposure

**Group 6:** Not addressed.

**Group 7**
- Communicate (internal and external)
  - Resources
  - Successes
- Award/recognition aligned with research/scholarship
- Online newsletter to faculty
- Present scholarship in action

**Group 8:** Not addressed.

**Group 9**
- Effective use of IT
- Keep up with technological IT advances and use to support engagement & outreach
- Partner with UT Extension
- 95 TN county Extension offices to get the word out and tell our story
E7: What others essential questions can you contemplate and provide input on?

**Group 2**
- Are we engaging companies around us?
- Re-evaluate P&T and resources
- Outreach
- Collaboration-credit
- How to recruit, attract, and retain
- Support faculty

**Group 3**
- Model of Associate Deans meetings to coordinate engagement
- Office of Strategic Partnerships model from University of Michigan
- Profile of assets/strengths (University of Wisconsin)
- More electronic/web presence

**Group 4**
- We should strategically promote our success to focus not only on the dollars, but also scholarship, arts/humanities, outreach stories, community impact stories, etc.

**Group 5:** Not addressed.

**Group 6:** Not addressed

**Group 7**
- Are we investing in proportion to anticipated outcomes?
- People
- Facilities
- Undergraduate research

**Group 8** Not addressed

**Group 9**
- Ask customers what their needs are
- How much can the Office of Research do?
- Know the METRICS of how performance is being evaluated and proceed accordingly!
- Overcome policy barriers….better yet ELIMINATE barriers!
**R1: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing research services?**

**Group 5**
- Office of Research and Sponsored Program to continue offering support for new researchers AND experienced researchers transitioning to new opportunities.

**R2: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing communications?**

**Group 5**
- Comments made regarding Get UT’s message out to the community and constituencies. Research and scholarly activity taking place at UT and it is not featured or highlighted as often as it should be.
- Work with communication office to tell research stories and involve external constituencies.
- Publicity about UT’s great achievements
- More presence with Federal agencies

**R3: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing government relations?**

**Group 5**
- Connecting with other Universities in the region on common issues for stronger voice.
- Connecting with regional and state government (e.g., “Posters on the Hill”)

**R4: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing IP and innovation?**

**Group 2**
- Expanding role of UTRF and patting them on the back
- Make UTRF path easy to follow – streamline
- Contracting

**R5: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing partnerships?**

**Group 2**
See all our previous answers

**R6: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing multi-disciplinary research?**

**Group 2**
Fix multicampus collaborations on the business side-set up, authorization, credit

**Group 9**
See response to questions 3 & 4
R7: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing F & A distribution?

**Group 3**
F&A is Office of Research’s biggest chance to recoup losses
Educate faculty who want more money from opportunity

**Group 7**
Not addressed.

**Group 9**
- Does current F&A distribution policy encourage multi-disciplinary research?
- As F&A increases, additional funds should be provided to the Office of Research to grow their programs and provide more assistance to faculty
- Is current system effective or should it be modified?
R8: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing administrative efficiency?

**Group 7**
- HR – separate research-funded personnel from state-funded personnel

R9: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing research incentives?

**Group 7**
- P&T/Annual Reviews – Change the paradigm!
- Institutionalize
- Multidisciplinary
- Value for undergraduate research

R10: How can the O.R. assist in supporting and realizing infrastructure-core facilities?

**Group 4**
- Should build core facilities around “Big Ideas”.
- Need to implement user models earlier in the major equipment acquisition process to ensure these core facilities are sustainable long-term.

R11: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing infrastructure-space?

**Group 4**
- Need more space and critically examine the current use of space

**Group 9**
- Forward thinking for building needs
- Infrastructure maintenance
- A plan for equipment acquisitions/upkeep/maintenance
- Integrated MASTER PLAN!

R12: How can the O.R. assist in supporting and realizing research information technologies?

**Group 4**
See discussion during the afternoon session.

O1: Are there Office of Research activities that can support initiatives associated?

**Group 2**
- Move to reliable, paperless, electronic-based system
- Need an efficient coordination system for all compliance issues
- Greater emphasis on financing/rewarding/supporting faculty for national boards and service, professional boards, etc. = VISIBILITY

**Group 9**
- Most items were condensed in the following categories….
  - Staff
  - Trans-disciplinary research planning
  - Engagement
  - Compliance
  - Faculty Service
Afternoon Session:
The following two questions are the breakout questions for your group in the afternoon session:

- System Coordination
- Benchmarking
**OR1: How can you or the Office of Research assist in addressing this issue or supporting and realizing this idea? Please be specific to each idea.**

**Group 2**
- Move to a paperless, electronic system
  - Reduce red tape burden for faculty (travel / reimbursement; effort certification-faculty development; IRB; multiple reports)

**Group 3**
- Strategic focus on research investments:
- Identify areas of research interest and focus investment; ORU program
- Identify large opportunities early to strategic areas
- Use UTSI relationships with funding agencies
- Infiltrate Federal agency R&D agendas
- Who are the UTK players involved with policy?
- How do we get faculty to go to funding agencies?
- Host seminars from DoD, DOE, NIH
- Share government funding agency contacts
- Local level support for faculty: Junior faculty
- Staff retention and compensation; TERA-PAMS; expand the PDT; staff incentives
- Turnover in SPO
- Need benchmarking
- FIX TERA-PAMS
- Technology resources – web presence

**Group 4**
- TERA-PAMS/Compliance data management systems; Improve communication between TERA users and community of practice.
- AAHRPP accreditation for IRB and Compliance staffing
- Staff retention, compensation, and incentives; losing good talent to other colleges.
- How best to coordinate with the UT System and the UT System components.

**Group 5**
- Expand the Proposal Development Team; A continuum of support; Single PIs
- College and Dept Level Support: Help needed for the individual PI at the department level.
- Pursue larger center-type projects
- Provision of project management support
- Funding streams identified
- Academic Outreach and Engagement Council (AOEC) status
- Infiltrate Federal agency R&D agendas
- Increased presence at key Federal agencies
- More influence & advance knowledge
- Helping design/influence RFPs

**Group 6**
- Strategic focus on research investments
- Support core research facilities with staff & funds
- Assist faculty around proposal development
- Coordinate/ integrate with colleges earlier in the proposal process to enhance quality and compliance.
- Large opportunities: seek a mechanism to obtain cost share funds earlier for big proposals

**Group 7**
- Reduce red tape
- Formalize institutional expectations; get all “on the same page,” BUT realize that not one size fits all
- Re-engage faculty and support expectations

**Group 8**
- OR has not been able to retain top staff – lost to other UTK units that can offer promotion
- “Money is not everything” – leadership and recognition are important
- Develop a more responsive, functional career ladder program for OR
- Staff promotion (unit management) through UT HR cumbersome based on HR job descriptions

**Group 9**
**Staff Issues**
- Compensation and retention
- No connection with faculty bonus plan and staff
- Staff leaving or to departments, receiving higher pay
- Communicate with HR on positions and salaries

**Compensation & Retention Issues**
- No connection with Faculty Bonus Program and Staff
- Communicate with HR RE: job grade, title, pay
- Staff leaving OR to Departments because of increased grade and salary

**Compliance**
- All compliance systems should be electronic….NO PAPER!
- More compliance will be mandated; need to manage this
- Costs

- Policy (System VS Unit)
- Proper training of faculty & grad students
OR2: What new or additional issues or ideas should be explored and what are your recommendations to best address these issues or ideas?

Group 2
- Local level support for faculty
- Staff retention and compensation
- Expand the PDT
- Faculty and staff outreach and training
- Staff incentives.
- Delineate staff roles, expectations; educate/support
- Upper level advocacy for compliance
- Compliance data management systems; compliance staffing; and reduce red tape burden for faculty
- Need coordination system for all compliance issues
- Greater emphasis on service (reward/support faulty for national boards and service (federal agencies, professional boards, etc.= visibility)
- Define/declare role of engagement in OR
- Support/reward research that has community impact

Group 3
Staff retention and compensation; TERA-PAMS; expand PDT; faculty/staff outreach/training; staff incentives

Strategic relationships
- “Heavy hitters” with ties to agencies
- PI base for strategic grants, emphasis on program management
- Alumni and current relationships key partners
- Identify areas of strategic interest then identify faculty with that talent or for hiring
- UTSI – work with UTK, share networking
- More institutional support regarding budgets
- Reward process/promotion and tenure process
- Create standard of training for PostDocs – compliance issues

Faculty “buy-in”
- PDT support
- Faculty mentoring
- Communicate training programs to new hires/all faculty
- Reward process/promotion and tenure process
- Create standard of training for PostDocs – compliance issues

Value Networking System
- Market what we have to offer in partnership
- Clean up compliance red tape
- Train faculty to network, partner
- Communicate what sponsored research support exist
- Infrastructure!
- Diversity issues/cooperation networking
- Delegated authority to take burden off of Office of Research

Group 6
- OR partner with other campus organizations (OIT and library) to provide data management / compliance plan services for proposals
- Reduce red tape burden for faculty
- In internal competitions for annual limited submissions, OR could prioritize proposals not selected to identify PIs that should be encouraged in subsequent calls to avoid re-competition among the same PIs the following year.

Group 7
- Provide “local support” for proposal development in colleges, departments (create perception of priority)
- Engage in discussions to create the method for faculty to maximize local support
- Change priorities to support strategic thinking
- Show outcomes and benefits of this approach; consider a pilot project for introduction

Group 8
- Increase availability of data that represents the spectrum of academic activities at UTK, including teaching outcomes
- Target data collection (at least initially) on anticipated/recurring large RFAs
- Establish discipline-specific benchmarking for individual units (i.e., top 10 metrics), and normalized across units where possible

Group 9
- Collaboration issues
- Inadequate funding
- Better link to Campus Communication resources to get information about what we do out to the public
- OR should develop a dialogue with UT Extension
- Develop good stories with a WOW factor
**Group 1**

**Morning Session**
- Initiate Top 25 plan to identify “Areas of Distinction” – Understand who we are, what we can achieve, and also, what we offer in partnership
- Expanding UG Research – Academic semester grants for research for the purpose of establishing the importance of scholarship at all levels
- Transdisciplinary Research – Funding and personnel to support large-scale (centers) and nascent (just two faculty members!) seed funding opportunities
- Strengthening Key Partnerships – UT system & components and ORNL – For UTK to succeed, these partnerships must be powerful. Collaborate first and resolve issues to mutual benefit as collaborating
- Federal Government Relations – We are so far behind compared to our peers! We need to add the resources for putting faculty members with key decision-makers mainly in Washington

**Afternoon Session**
- Large Opportunities (multipronged approach)
- Impacts the issue: Strategic focus on research investments
- Identify “Areas of Distinction”
- Allocate funds for select faculty time for large proposal development
- Focus ORU, SARIF and Science Alliance funds to assist
- Impacts the issue: expanding the Proposal Development Team
- Augment PDT (Ph.D.-level individuals with technical/academic expertise)
- Leverage key partnerships (UT, ORNL, Universities, corporations)
- Strengthen & Leverage efforts to connect faculty to key program officers
- Faculty hiring – Leverage GC program and select senior hires (non-ORNL, all disciplines)
- Purchase Academic Analytics software to enable benchmarking
- Purchase Academic Analytics software
- Get OIT to fix TERA

UGR faculty mentor program
- OR support for UG pursuit of external research $
- Better coordinate UTK UG’s participation in ORNL research (use academic-semester intern model?)
- Academic semester grants for UG research (could include travel support)

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**Group 9**

**Group 9 Morning Summary**

Three topics considered the most important….
- Implicit in all questions is that something is broken, or missing, or needs improvement – this begs the question to define objectives and identify metrics for evaluation – once this is known many other things will fall into place.
- Communication; this is an area that we need to continuously be aware of and enhance whenever possible. Better knowledge of our strengths and enhancing communication within and between components of the UT System is absolutely necessary to be maximally effective.
- Need an effective mechanism to encourage trans-disciplinary research
  - Monetary incentives
  - Effective policies with few barriers
  - We need to know and communicate our strengths
  - How will trans-disciplinary research impact P&T?
  - Communication
  - Determine what motivates faculty to participate in trans-disciplinary research
  - Important to recognize that this will require a change in culture from independent research to trans-disciplinary research
  - Culture here at UT – difference within and between units – need to be really clear about mission, objectives