Office of Research

Listening Session #3
Group Responses

January 14, 2013
UT Conference Center
600 Henley Street; Knoxville, TN 37902

Invited Groups
New Faculty
Assistant Professors
Associate Professors
Full Professors
Chancellor Professors
Distinguished Scientist
Governor Chairs
Joint Faculty
Faculty Senate Officers
Research Council Members
Undergraduate Students
Graduate Students
**E1: How can the Office of Research help expand and support excellence in scholarship?**

**Group 1**
- Give proposal an appropriate critique before submission.

**Group 4**
- Defined “excellence in scholarship” as additional dollars spent, recognition at national societies, scholarships, competition in fellowships, and certain grants (e.g., NSF CAREER) and publication in scholarly journals, publishing contracts, etc.
- 70% of faculty time spent writing proposals; “Need to change the way we teach Engineering Sciences
- Have less “hands-on” teaching than we should; need to offer more lab experience.
- Should communicate “what fellowships are out there”
- Publish a list of faculty with NSF grants to allow faculty to direct undergraduate students to them in the pursuit of an REU supplement.
- “Tying together” graduates / undergraduates and faculty in fellowships.
- OR to brief grad students on opportunities.
E2: How can the OR help expand and support corporate & foundation R&D?

**Group 1**
- Corporate and Foundation Development streamlined
- Help formalize long term cooperation
- Synergize disciplines to get research dollars from corporations
- Connect researches with consortiums and R&D research
- Make databases for corporations and foundations with keyword enable search available

**Group 2**
- Hire more people that are already good at developing corporate partnerships and senior enough to already have useful contact networks.

**Group 4**
- Utilize alumni organization more
- Involve Research Foundation more

- Make colleges aware of corporate and foundation opportunities.
- Dept. heads “make it clear” that basic department functions still need to be done; less value placed on transdisciplinary efforts
- UTOR is the correct place for database of outreach and transdisciplinary research, minority programs, etc.
- Would like to see more corporate / foundation visits to campus RE: funding opportunities
E3: How can the OR help expand and support “Big Idea” large strategic initiatives?

Group 1
- Get “Core Facilities” up and running and make capability known to the campus community
- Enhance and revisit forms of communication to faculty
  - Repeat message regularly
  - Hard copy newsletters appreciated
  - More information in research newsletters
- Meet with new department heads individually and review Office of Research services and capabilities
E4: How can the OR help expand and support transdisciplinary scholarship?

**Group 1**
No addressed – answered in E5 and E6

**Group 2**
- See comments for R6.

**Group 3**
- Assign credit for publishing multidisciplinary work (e.g., getting credit for publishing in another discipline’s journals).

**Group 4**
- OR should set up a database of expertise to provide ability to search for other faculty for collaboration purposes.
- Problem getting other departments to participate; they have different priorities.
- Tenure and promotion structure does not support transdisciplinary scholarship. Depts. and Colleges do not place value on writing grants, only value is on actual awards.
E5: How can the Office of Research help grow and support strategic partnerships?

**Group 1**
- Expanded use of Research Capacity Catalog
- Use Associate Deans to get ideas and opportunities to cross different college boundaries
- Broaden targeted email delivery
- Centers operate in isolation

**Group 2**
- See comments for R5.

**Group 4**
- New SEC $2,500 travel grant could help enhance strategic partnerships
- There seems to be some “tension” between UT and ORNL
- Department issues about co-authorship on papers with ORNL
E6: How can the Office of Research define and support engagement & outreach serving the research and scholarly enterprise?

**Group 1**
- Leverage sources outside the university
- Proactive engagement of community in scholarly and other activities
  - Take research to the community; e.g., engage the College of Arts to help communicate our research on obesity to various school systems
- Office of Research to facilitate “matchmaking” among academic units
- Target collaborative announcements

**Group 2**
- Define institutional priorities RE: engagement & outreach to wisely use limited resources and leverage our efforts in teaching & research
- Allocate more resources to support efforts RE: context of priorities
- It takes more people than we currently using
- Institutionally important to feature faculty and student research as important outcome at UTK and poorly understood by public
- Faculty and students not trained to communicate to the general public, or have easy pathways for such activity.
- OR & UTK Communications should collaborate to provide training and avenues for increasing this type of institutional communication by faculty and students
- Create undergraduate outreach class
- Understand what is available pre-award and post-award that suits a faculty member at different points in their career
- Faculty must know what these services are and how to access them (it’s also beneficial to have localized support closer to the faculty members)
- Determine how to engage students
- Tap into freshman and sophomore student ties with their former high schools to feature opportunities and roles of research for students at UTK.
- We develop materials to distribute to the public. Is there a better way for the public to get the information that they need?

**Group 4**
- Evaluation system should reflect valuing transdisciplinary research
- IP development is now included in the evaluation process
- OR can provide a website list of minority institutions for faculty
E7: What others essential questions can you contemplate and provide input on?

**Group 3**

- Increase tele-presence with ORNL (e.g., VTC capabilities) to enable better access to seminars, graduate training, etc.
- Provide better benefits for unmarried partners to enhance faculty retention.
- Increase funding to support more graduate and undergraduate research assistantships, especially in the summer.
- Develop way for OR personnel to work more closely/directly with colleges and centers.
- Clarify policies that define OR vs. Development funding.
- Enhance communications so PIs in related research areas will know what their colleagues are doing. (Since closing the UT Faculty Club, there is no informal gathering place for faculty to meet with peers to discuss research ideas.)
- Increase publicity for non-monetary faculty awards.
R1: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing research services?

Group 1
- Information dissemination
- More support for tenured long term faculty after start-up funds expended
R2: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing communications?

Group 1
No Discussion – Answered earlier
R3: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing government relations?

Group 1
- Engage researchers as agency proposal reviewers
- Develop personal relationships
- Meet Program Managers.
- Better utilize our connections
R4: How can the OR assist in supporting and realizing IP and Innovation?

Group 2
- Move to using provisional patents
- Where does IP sit in university purposes?
- Use some IP as a partnership tool with industry.
- Issue of how to leverage IP
R5: How can the OR assist in supporting and realizing Strategic Partnerships?

Group 2
- Invest in infrastructure (people, facilities, tools, hardware, software, technology) to support growth of partnerships with corporations, NGOs, other universities and governmental agencies.
- Hire more people good at developing corporate partnerships
- Office of Research needs better data management. Difficult to accomplish successfully by individual PIs.
- Few people at UTK have developing partnerships as part of their job responsibilities; develop a training program with the assistance of one or more outside experts/consultants
- IP issues often stops research in its tracks. Provide training to faculty and staff concerning IP when faculty get to that point.
- Utilize alumni organization more
- Involve Research Foundation more
R6: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing Multidisciplinary or Transdisciplinary Scholarship?

**Group 2**

- Faculty don’t know of other faculty activities
- Need more neutral spaces to allow faculty to collaborate and combine resources from different areas
- The institution can support by:
  - Cluster hiring – crosses college lines and hire around excellence themes
  - Identifying areas of research excellence. They are likely to be multidisciplinary.
  - Revise program and faculty reviews to encourage multidisciplinary scholarship.
- Create opportunities to get faculty of common interests together; e.g., via poster / lecture style meetings, or through celebratory gathering to recognize faculty and promote collaboration.
- It is difficult to meet people from other departments; faculty are insular.
- Single author papers more valued than co-authored multidisciplinary papers in faculty reviews; review criteria need revision
- Degree counting is by solo department or if multidisciplinary the degree for counting purposes is split; encourage more multidisciplinary degrees by double counting when doing tracking within institution.
- OR could develop forms of faculty recognition; faculty could talk about what they are doing during a celebration style event
- Have 30-sec. snapshots of faculty research. Mic Nite a good prototype, but has numerous barriers – held at night and in locations that many are not familiar with.
- Encourage research leaders from different campuses to get together; provide small grants to encourage cross campus interactions. Start small & expand.
- Set expectations for those receiving ORU support that they need to reach out across campus. Annual assessment should include a community-building component to break down barriers.
- Faculty could label themselves in 10 areas they work in to map out who they can work with; to be interactive like Visual Thesaurus, not a list, the more dynamic the better.
- Need to better display & communicate research both internal and external (a central theme for improving many areas of the research enterprise).
- Have research spotlights.
- OR set more expectations for organizations that receive OR support to conduct more multidisciplinary / collaborative work.
- RCC could be more widely promoted and also more sophisticated with tagging and mapping; make it easier for faculty to find those who may be possible collaborators.
Group 3

- Develop distribution mechanism so centers are not competing with departments for funding.
- Permit F&A to be carried over and used past the 6/30 fiscal year end.
R8: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing administrative efficiency?
R9: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing research incentives?

Group 3
• Provide pre- and post-award administrative support at Department level.
• Buy out faculty time to encourage pursuit of research opportunities.
• Designate a certain amount of F&A as a “bonus” fund that could be added to PIs’ salaries based on criteria established by each college.
R10: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing infrastructure-core facilities?

Group 4

- Core facilities more of an OR function – OR should help coordinate and/or facilitate.
- OR could list core facilities as resource and help PIs in pursuing grants; e.g., MRIs, etc.
- Percentage of new facilities (~5%) as undedicated for future expansion and new use.

- When space IS available, funding not available to bring it up to code; some space now sitting vacant for this reason.
- Good core facilities and adequate space add to the “critical mass” of why new faculty would want to move here – in addition to existing benefits of good schools, local resources, culture events, parks, etc.
R11: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing infrastructure-space?

Group 4
Same responses as in R10 above.
R12: How can the Office of Research assist in supporting and realizing research information technologies?
OI: Are there Office of Research activities that can support initiatives associated with the (faculty, graduate and undergraduate) components? Please define.

Group 4
- A proposal should never come back “UN-REVIEWED” due to missing something “in the fine print”
Other Comments

**Group 2**

- Need to identify where our priorities are. Necessary for efficient allocation of resources.
- There are numerous competing demands for faculty time, infrastructure, faculty profiling, etc. The more things that UT can do to prevent the arrows from going in different directions the more successful we can be.
- Need to be more enabling.
- Reinforce and strengthen communication that supports UTK being the state research institution.
- Collaboration may have to be incentivized as faculty might not make the effort to do so on their own.

**Group 4**

**TOP FIVE ISSUES**

1. Searchable database of expertise (which exists) and existing grants (which does not yet).
2. Bring Corporate / Foundation people on campus frequently, as they can “see the future” of product and technology development and would be willing to outlay research dollars up front.
3. Encourage graduate / undergraduate students to pursue national awards and scholarship; i.e., Rhodes Scholars, Mellon Grant, Goldwater, NSF Graduate Fellowship, etc.
4. Add value to entire grant-writing process (both funded and non-funded) vs. solely on grants won.
5. OR effort to identify impediments on campus to research; e.g., limitations on startup funds, needing more flexibility. (Note email from Beth Nielson regarding this issue:)

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**Hi Bill and Miriam,**

I just wanted to follow-up on the start-up comments made in this morning’s listening session. The Office of Research has almost no restrictions on the use of start-up funds. Our restrictions include no moving expenses, no support of visa type expenses for the faculty member, and no purchases of equipment of equipment for locations not owned and operated by UTK. Deans and department heads do have the authority to add restrictions so it could be that an individual faculty member is told no to a certain expense but that restriction is not coming from the Office of Research.

Special start-up carryover is allowed to be requested and there is a procedure in place. The request is started by the faculty member and then is routed through the department and college. The due date to the Office of Research is May 15 of every year. We don’t penalize success so an allowable carryover justification is if a faculty member received a grant in the first 3 years so their whole start-up package was not spent within that period. Again, deans and department heads have the authority to add restrictions.