

**Utah State University
Research Council Minutes
November 29, 2007 - 3:00 p.m.
Champ Hall**

RESEARCH COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Clifford Skousen
for Doug Anderson
Jeff Broadbent
Byron Burnham
Nancy Mesner
for Nat Frazer

Jagath Kaluarachchi
for Scott Hinton
Richard Mueller
for Mary Hubbard
Gary Kiger
James MacMahon

Mac McKee
Brent Miller
Doug Ramsey
Jim Dorward
for Carol Strong

INVITED GUESTS:

Jeri Brunson
Ray DeVito
Anna McEntire

David Paul
Richard Roberts
Sara Rule

Teresa Seeholzer
Lorraine Walker
Bart Weimer
Ned Weinschenker

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approval of Minutes of October 25, 2007** (Brent Miller)
Bart Weimer motioned to approve the minutes of October 25th, 2007. Gary Kiger seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSIONS

1. **Welcome & Introductions** (Brent Miller)
2. **Presentation: National Children's Study By: Richard Roberts**
- **Introduced By: Sara Rule**

Childhood disorders and diseases are exponentially growing. For example, historical autism ratios were previously at ~ 1:1000 occurrences, but recent data shows the ratio to be ~ 1:150 occurrences. Richard Roberts noted that these increases are not a result of better test equipment and detection methods, but a result of the environment and conditions in which people live. Richard highlighted concerns related to the annual cost of early childhood diseases and disorders in the United States. The financial impact

alone totals \$ 758.7 billion annually; Injury \$ 480 Billion, Obesity \$ 117 Billion, Diabetes \$ 132 Billion, Asthma \$ 14 Billion, Neurodevelopment \$ 9 Billion, and Low Birth Weight \$ 6 Billion.

The National Children's Study has been targeted to ***define the interaction of environment and genetics in health and development of 100,000 children from conception (also pre-conception) to 21 years of age.*** Dr. Ed Clark, Department Head of Pediatrics at the University of Utah Medical Center, is one of the early founders of the Children's Study. This collaborative project includes several federal agencies (EPA, NIH, and CDC) and will include detailed analysis in the following areas: 1) Biological and Chemical Agents, 2) Physical Surrounding, 3) Social Interactions, 4) Behavioral Influences and Outcomes, 5) Genetics, and 6) Cultural and Family Influences.

Richard displayed a map of the seven vanguard study sites across the United States, along with sample site locations such as Cache Valley. Future potential sites in Southern Idaho and Western Wyoming are also targeted. The National Children's Study will include long-term commitment to the communities including government, public, and private partnerships. Richard commented that technology will play a critical part with data collection. Utah State University has numerous strengths in the areas identified and is well positioned to participate in the second RFP phase of supplemental R01 and R03 funding opportunities. Brent commented that this study will not only focus on Human Development, Psychology and Parenting, but there is a strong environmental and biological development emphasis that would include opportunities for participation from the Colleges of Science and Engineering.

Richard Roberts and Brent Miller invited each of the deans and department heads, as well as all interested parties, to participate in the initial USU National Children's Study planning meeting scheduled in Champ Hall on Tuesday, December 4th, at 10:00 a.m. An e-mail notice of this meeting will be sent to each of the deans as well as center directors campus wide.

3. **Growing Research at USU – Progress Update** By: Jeff Broadbent

Jeff recapped the mission of the Research Focus Group and thanked all those who participated both in time and input to formalizing recommendations for growing research at USU.

Jeff summarized the committee's work which included the following: 1) Investigated best practices to grow R&D at several US universities, 2) Reviewed USU strengths and opportunities, 3) Established strategic priorities, goals, and metrics, 4) Formulated investment strategies and recommendations, and 5) Identified potential challenges.

The committee determined that in order to grow research, it would be important to preserve the things USU does best, identify strategic investments to elevate strengths, and brainstorm ideas for new programs that would enhance USU's ability to grow

research. The committee determined that in order to improve success rates with grant proposals, it would be necessary to restructure existing seed funding (NFRG & CURI) and ***target new programs with specific missions/goals and expected outcomes***. Jeff recapped each of the following new programs and shared a table that listed the recommendations, eligibility requirements, funding amounts, and required outcome for each of the current and proposed seed funding programs:

- Grant-Writing Experience Through Mentorship (GEM)
- Grants to Aid Research for Teaching-intensive Faculty (GART)
- Research Catalyst (RC)
- Seed Program to Advance Research Collaboration (SPARC)
- Grant Writers Institute

Jeff presented a proposed budget and timeline for implementing the new seed funding recommendations and stated that CURI has been suspended to allow for the new opportunities. Additionally, NFRG for 2008/2009 will end on June 30, 2009. After discussing the projected budget amounts, Jeff stated that amounts for the new programs will increase as USU recovers more F&A funds.

Observations/Comments:

- How do we pay for the Grant Writing Institute (GWI)? The VPR office will provide the initial funding support through FY2011. Thereafter, the colleges would pay 100% of the funding. Lorraine Walker commented that at Missouri University, Columbia, they have seen a 40:1 return in research award dollars. As MU expanded their GWI across campus, a slight drop resulted for those departments with less research experience, however, the return ratio was still excellent at 30:1 overall.
- What is the budget and timeline for hiring grant writers? One per year unless a college/department wants to participate sooner by sharing the cost to add additional resources for their unit(s). MU has added almost 2 per year.
- The new seed funding recommendations are an excellent way to help faculty advance professionally.

Brent thanked Jeff Broadbent and all those who contributed to this analysis over the past year. The next step will be to present these recommendations to USU's V.P. and Executive Council.

4. **Reimbursed Overhead on State & Local Government Contracts**

By: Brent Miller & Lorraine Walker

A handout was distributed showing where USU ranks in percentage of on-campus research F&A rates as compared to other peer institutions. The table also included a column showing the effective F&A rate for each of the same institutions. Brent commented that the effective rate is a critical part of recovering the costs of research. As these indirect cost funds are collected, USU is able to invest in seed programs, startup packages, and equipment. Unfortunately, USU's current effective rate of 15.4% is very low as compared to USU's peer institutions. Only the University of California, Davis and New Mexico State rank lower.

Brent shared a printout of state policy, R537 – Reimbursed Overhead on State and Local Government Contracts. In section 3.1, Brent read the following from the policy: *Institutions of higher education shall charge, as partial reimbursement of costs incurred, a ten percent overhead rate on all contracts with state and local government agencies funded from non-federal sources, unless an overhead charge is expressly prohibited in the RFP issued by the state or local government agency.* Brent also referenced section 3.2, which addresses “flow through federal funds”, and section 3.3 relative to clarification on retaining ten percent overhead on all contracts from non-federal sources.

Brent commented that there are past examples of when USU has received contracts with federal flow through funds, but faculty (and agencies) will relay that the contract doesn't carry any overhead. This outcome significantly hinders USU's ability to recover those indirect costs and reduces available funding for startup packages and seed grants.

Brent asked those attending Research Council to help relay this information to their colleges and help assure this policy is followed so that USU is able to collect the full overhead where possible.

Observations/Comments:

- David Paul and Brent Miller clarified how ONR sets USU's rate.
- Jim Dorward noted that funding which comes from the Federal Department of Education goes directly to the Utah Office of Education and is then distributed to the universities. He asked if USU should be talking to the state education offices to ensure F&A is attached to flow through dollars? Brent Miller and David Paul agreed.
- Doug Ramsey commented that when department heads do return overhead to faculty, they more fully understand the concept and the value added benefits of recovering overhead.
- Nancy Mesner noted that private companies have overhead rates as well, but they are included and noted differently within a proposal. She suggested that if USU actively communicated with state agencies and educated them about F&A rates, it would improve their understanding of costs associated with overhead.

5. **Center of Excellence Program (COEP) Applications and Review Procedures**

By: Ray DeVito

Ray explained the purpose of the Utah COEP Center of Excellence Program (COEP). He commented that centers of excellence evolve as a “next step” once a researcher has developed an innovative idea that is ready to be commercialized. These are state-sponsored programs that assist the researcher with funds to move technology forward and create jobs for Utah.

COE opportunities have continued to expand and the State of Utah has increased available funding from \$ 2 million to \$ 3 million for 2008. Ray noted that COE proposals are unique and different from research proposals as they require technical appeal, appropriate level of development, intellectual property position, commercial justification, and linkage to potential job growth in Utah.

Ray shared 2007/2008 Utah COEP funding statistics and commented that the proposal phase happens very quickly. As each proposal requires approval from the department head, VPR, and TCO office, Ray stressed that preparation is important to assure all COEP requirements are met and approval signatures are not delayed until 1-2 days before the submission deadline. Ray also covered the terms and conditions associated with COE proposals and relayed changes for both the state and university level for 2008. USU changes include the following:

- 1) TCO coach assigned to each proposer before “Intent to Submit” is made to COE.
- 2) TCO and PI identify if technology is one where a major in-state licensee is reasonable with anticipated Utah economic impact.
- 3) Commercial justification.
- 4) Intellectual property status defined.
- 5) Proposal review process will require review and approval/sign off at least two weeks before COE submission deadline.

Suggestions/Comments:

- Deans/Center Directors should also be included in the approval process.
- Bart Weimer and David Paul suggested that in the review process, there may be some instances where a review committee would be beneficial. Internal review committees could interface as mentors to guide and direct proposal that might not be ready for submission, or where additional work is needed with the tech transfer and business model.
- Empower the TCO to take a “stronger hand” in the submission process.
- TCO expects the submission timeline for 2008 to be similar to 2007.

6. **2008 Research Calendar & VPR Projects** By: Anna McEntire

All calendars will be mailed by Monday, December 17th. The 2008 distribution list includes all professional and administrative staff at USU, Old Main Society, state and federal officials, community partners, presidents and vice presidents of all NASULGC institutions, as well as numerous commercial businesses within the state of Utah.

Research Matters is underway and targeted for release the end of March, 2008. Anna distributed a handout which listed researchers that have been identified for the 2008 publication. She asked that each college/center forward information about USU faculty accomplishments and research related awards (i.e. National or International Distinction Awards) for 2007. Brent noted that units can forward information about faculty publications and the VPR team will review and determine if these will be included. Anna will send an electronic copy of the preliminary list to each of the offices so that corrections/additions can be returned to her via e-mail at: annab@cc.usu.edu. Anna also asked that each of the colleges be aware of the following dates for Research Week 2008:

- Monday: March 31, 2008 → Faculty Research Day & Research Awards Luncheon.
NOTE: All deans are requested to attend.

In preparation for Research Week and Robin's Awards, each of the colleges will be contacted in January and asked to submit names for Faculty Researcher of the Year, Undergraduate Mentor of the Year, and Undergrad Researcher of the year.

7. **Other Issues and Upcoming Calendar Events**

- January 24, 2008 --- Research Council
- January 24, 2008 --- Undergraduate Researchers Posters on the Hill
- January 25, 2008 --- Sunrise Session
- February 28, 2008 --- Research Council
- March 31st – April 4th, 2008 --- USU Research Week

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By: Teresa Seeholzer, Research Council Secretary