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The New Normal for Research
Break-Out Group Report
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What is the New Normal for research?

As a result of changes that have occurred over the last 10 or more years, faculty are expected to do more with less resources. In general, there:

- are fewer faculty; those that are left are teaching more classes
- are more students and pressure to increase numbers of graduate students
- is less infrastructure and support funding available
- is increased emphasis on seeking extramural funding
- is less time for research due to greater demands for teaching and paperwork
- is a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary research

Faculty with research appointments hired 10-20 years ago would have had support from the University for basic programs, graduate student stipends, secretarial support, travel, and office computers. In general, these have been reduced or eliminated in the “New Normal,” Individuals now have the sense that they are running small businesses, where faculty are expected to generate all the support for their programs.

Interdisciplinary research has become part of the new norm. This has positives and negatives for faculty. Total research funding is reduced and what is available, is in targeted areas that result in faculty constantly having to change direction to chase funding. Some funding opportunities are in areas that are politically driven and controversial (e.g., climate change, stem cells, etc.). The “New Normal for Research” has resulted in a disturbing direction for the University and conveys the idea that every field must justify its existence based on its ability to obtain funding. This is of particular concern to researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences, but affects all areas. While the majority of federal funding may be in biomedical and engineering related disciplines, as a University, we should maintain active research in diverse areas.

The general policy to increase graduate student numbers should be refined to specific areas where there is a demand for students with advanced degrees.

Recommendations:

There is a need to reaffirm the idea of what a University should be. Independent research and free inquiry should be at the core of the University.

The University of Georgia is a Research University within the University System. An expectation for this level of institution is that instruction will come from faculty that are actively engaged in research. The University of Georgia is the state's "most comprehensive, and most diversified institution of higher education." The research arm of the institution must be protected and preserved. The institution must find ways to "value" research in areas beyond those that are currently targeted.

1. Preserve time for research:

Protect young faculty from "distractions" to their research objectives. This may include release time from teaching for assistant professors. In addition, there should be consideration for alternate class scheduling. This will benefit faculty at all levels. Options could include moving to 55 minute class sessions and a 14 week semester or moving to 75 minute class sessions taught 2 days per week instead of 3 (e.g., M-W, T-Th, or W-F vs. T-Th and M-W-F).

2. Maintain or rebuild infrastructure:

Recent budget cuts have affected the infrastructure of the University at many levels. Examples that were discussed include: maintaining library periodicals and books, OVPR support staff and general research support for faculty.

The number of periodical subscriptions has been reduced. While the cuts were not as deep as they could have been, many faculty and students have been impacted. The impact seems to be discipline specific and again may be related to funding opportunities in disciplines that were cut less.

There has been increased pressure on faculty to seek out extramural funding. At the same time, the number of support staff in OVPR has not been maintained. An increase in the OVPR staff or in "local" grant specialists within the Colleges would greatly aid the faculty in identifying grants and in timely applications.

3. Institute a "Research Fee"

Students who choose to attend the University of Georgia should do so with the understanding that they are at a "Research University" within the state system. This should come with a premium. The value of attending a 'research university' needs to be emphasized by both faculty and the University administration. The research fee would constitute an additional fee paid by students that would support the research mission of the University. A fee in the range of \$500-1000/student per semester would generate \$25+ million per year. These funds would be used to fund internal research. Grants would be available to faculty at all levels from all areas. Faculty would have the opportunity to write proposals to cover research costs,

graduate student stipends, undergraduate research, or faculty study leaves. The research fee could also be used to support or rebuild infrastructure (library subscriptions, OVPR staff, etc.) and to fund need-based scholarships for tuition and to involve more students from low income families in undergraduate research. Providing internal funding represents an investment by the institution that will allow faculty to initiate research that in many cases will lead to larger external support.