



The University of Georgia

Teaching Academy

Date: March 28, 2015

To: Professor Pamela Whitten
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

From: Grants and Extramural Funding Break-out Group: Tim Foutz (Facilitator), Bynum Boley, Robert Bringolf, Michael Cacciator, Steve Stice, Kecia Thomas, Meredith Welch-Devine, Brian Wesolowski, Ann Woodyard and Susan Thomas

Re: Recommendations for Graduate Program Grants and Extramural Funding

Dear Provost Whitten,

The Grants and Extramural Funding group was assigned the task of exploring challenges and opportunities related to grant and extramural funding specific to increasing graduate student enrollment. The groups offers the following observations and recommendations.

Challenges

The group identified the following as challenges for increasing the amount of grants and extramural funding applied for and received on campus.

- Lack of clear resources to direct faculty to funding opportunities and to support them in the process
- Competing pressures that departments face in meeting the needs of undergraduate/graduate teaching & research with limited resources.
- In areas where external funding has not traditionally been the norm, there are few incentives to apply for funding and in some cases, disincentives.
- Increased resources needed to provide for resulting increased graduate student population (time, space, etc.)

Through our debates and discussions, it was clear that no one single model will address all of the challenges to increasing external grant productivity.

Strategies

The group discussed several approaches that the that the University administration can follow to address the above challenges. The university should

- Increase access to data regarding external funding applications. These include searchable inventory of grants, PIs who might have compatible research efforts. The group realized that such an approach is being implemented, but encourages a more robust system than the one we believe is coming online.
- Provide resources (e.g. travel, housing) that allows faculty to spend more time interacting with Funding Agencies
- Identify and better utilize on campus reviewers and successful grant recipients who can help guide faculty in preparing funding proposals
- Increase communication with business and industry to encourage corporate sponsorship of graduate fellowships
- Improve Grant Support (pre & post) by
 - Helping faculty make connections and find opportunities. Institutional administrative structure needs to support actual research (rather than bureaucratic bean counting).
 - Re-designing GrantSmart
 - Facilitating support for peer-review of grant proposals

Faculty

Changes in the University's culture surrounding external funding and its success depends on an understanding that faculty are at the center of this enterprise (rather than being mere deliverers of it). There also needs to be an awareness that over the last decade many faculty, departments, and colleges have not heavily invested in pursuing external funding because they were investing in other "mission critical" aspects of the University, particularly towards its undergraduate mission, and it needs to be clear how those needs will be met if resources are reallocated. The groups identified the following needs:

- Attract and retain top research faculty (competitive salary, benefits)
- Incentives and necessary support for faculty to increase grant productivity/grad student enrollment, especially in units/colleges that do not have strong external funding histories/cultures
- Sabbaticals
- Create an atmosphere of appreciation
- Include graduate mentoring in faculty teaching loads

Interdisciplinary and Innovation

The group identified the following as opportunities that will increase faculty efforts toward generating more innovative funding proposals

- Create opportunities for faculty interaction
- Create a Faculty Lounge/Club which provides space to bring faculty together, foster collaboration, increase morale. This space could be real and/or virtual and should allow structured interaction as well as freeform interaction.
- Promote interdisciplinary relationships with focus on disciplines that are often considered to different to have common research foci
- Provide incentives and necessary support for faculty to increase grant productivity and graduate student enrollment

- Create an Interdisciplinary Research Fellows that encourages faculty innovation
- Provide increased support to help faculty and units envision and develop strategies for greater diversity in both research and graduate student populations.

Incentives for Faculty to increase grant productivity/grad student enrollment

The group recommends that the University administration encourage faculty participation in securing extramural funding in order to grow the graduate program. To accomplish this, the following items should be provided

- Rewards for interdisciplinary research
- Increased F&A returns to faculty with more consistent guidance provided to colleges on the distribution of these returns
- Shifting the expectation models for 'non-science' disciplines in order to encourage research and other scholarly activities that increase funding potentials
- Provide more teaching support (non-tenure track faculty) positions to provide tenure-track faculty greater opportunities to conduct research and seek funding
- Develop back-up systems that would reduce teaching assignments for faculty who secure grants to support grad students
- Provide 'teaching credit' for serving as Major Professor

Deliverables - Short Term

The university should develop a large-scale RA initiative to fund research-specific graduate fellowships across campus, emphasizing areas where there are opportunities for growth, particularly in units that do not have strong histories of external funding. A Research Fellows Program-Modeled on the Lilly Fellows program should be establish. This program should provide each fellow 2-4 years to develop innovative, interdisciplinary research projects and actively seek funding to support both graduate students and research.

Deliverables - Long Term

The University administration should identify and support faculty who create highly fundable interdisciplinary research programs/clusters/areas: such as STEAM & Disparities. A Provost-level initiative should establish

- a "Research Fellows" program, modeled on the Lilly Teaching Fellowship, but has its focus on innovative interdisciplinary research opportunities,
- a Collaborative Research Initiative that would have highly fundable thematic emphases that rotate on an annual or biannual cycle.
- faculty buy-out program that provides significant time and resources for developing innovative and interdisciplinary research which would not naturally form.

The University administration should provide long-term support for travel and networking with national grant agencies and collaborators.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the "Grants and Extramural Funding" working group.