

Doubling Research on the IUPUI Campus First Annual Report – May 2005

Several major initiatives have been pursued this year that are consistent with approaches articulated in the Task Force Report on Doubling Research. These include a focus on the investigator, promoting collaborations, and improving the research support services.

Within the objective of “Supporting New Investigators” as well as ‘Supporting New Research and Scholarship Initiatives,” we launched the Research Support Funds Grant (RSFG) Program. The call for proposals was announced in February and the proposal deadline was April 15, 2005. Thirty nine proposals were received and awards will be announced by the end of May with funding available July 1. A second round of proposals will be solicited with a due date of October 15, 2005. One of the primary objectives of this new program is to fund new faculty members who need assistance in establishing research, scholarly, or artistic programs. This category is restricted to Assistant Professors. This category should not be considered as a substitute for departmental and college funding owed to such new faculty. Funding for this program comes from RIF dollars and it is expected this will be an on-going program. There is approximately \$1,000,000 annually available to support RSFG proposals. Thirty nine proposals were received for the first solicitation and the second round of proposals will be due October 15, 2005.

A second major initiative consistent with the Doubling Task Force Report was the solicitation of proposals for collaborations that will lead to the submission of proposals to NIH that meet the objectives of the new NIH Roadmap Initiative. A requirement of the campus solicitation was that proposals had to be based upon the collaboration of investigators from a minimum of two IUPUI schools. Funding for the program was derived from accumulated uncommitted funds in the Research Investment Fund (normally used for matches). Approximately \$300,000 will be awarded in May, 2005. Thirteen proposals were received and five will likely be funded. There is no commitment that this program can be continued unless an alternative source of funds can be identified. The faculty review committee strongly recommended we find a way to continue this initiative. One possibility is to support this type of program with some of the new funds that will be dedicated for research.

The Task Force on Doubling Research recommended we “Revise Research Support Services.” To address this objective, an external review was conducted of Research and Sponsored Programs in January, 2005. In response to the recommendations of the site visitors, a plan for the reorganization of the Research and Sponsored Programs office was proposed to Chancellor Bantz, Vice President McRobbie and Dean Brater. They accepted the proposal and agreed to provide the requested funding. The Office will be renamed Sponsored Research Services with W. Sid Johnson serving as Executive Director. The office is committed to streamlining the processing proposals for grants and contracts. There will be a single group for proposal processing and a second group focused on administering grants. Additional personnel will be added to both groups.

In an effort to streamline the process, proposals will be reviewed at only two levels (Department or Dean's office, and Sponsored Research Services) before they are submitted to external agencies. This means that the School of Medicine Dean's Office will stop reviewing proposals.

We have learned from the first cycle of review that we need to provide more support for junior faculty in writing proposals. They should be strongly encouraged to participate in a proposal writing workshop and to work with faculty mentors in developing their proposals.

We have consulted with the Council of Associate Deans for Research and the Faculty Council Research Committee regarding the creation of the funding initiative programs. The reorganization of the research office has also been discussed at several meetings with the Council of Associate Deans for Research.

It should be noted that by tracking sponsored funding proposals and awards on a rolling twelve month average, proposal submissions substantially increased (approximately 20% compared to the prior twelve month period) starting in January of 2004. Most recently the growth rate has plateaued, with an average rate of \$500 M in proposals being submitted in a 12 month period. Since September of 2004, awards in sponsored funding have averaged an 18% increase over the prior twelve month period. With the decline in Federal Funding, it is unlikely we will be able to sustain the growth in sponsored funding we have experienced. IUPUI schools that have had significant growth in their sponsored funding in the past 9 months include Dentistry, Engineering and Technology, Education, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Liberal Arts, Public and Environmental Affairs, and University College. The Schools of Medicine and Science have experienced nominal net change in awards during the past 9 months. However, the School of Science has had a dramatic increase in proposal submissions during this same time frame.

We will continue to closely monitor the activity of proposal submissions and awards. We will seek reports from recipients of the new internal grants programs (RSFG and Roadmap Initiative) to learn about proposals submitted to external agencies and the respective outcomes. In addition, we will request the associate deans for research to provide a report on what actions their respective schools have taken to address the objectives described in Doubling of Research Task Force Report. We will also conduct a survey in early 2006 of clients of the restructured Sponsored Research Services Office to assess their satisfaction with services being provided.

Finally, we need to recognize the dramatic shift in available federal dollars to support research has dramatically shifted from the doubling of the NIH budget to a stagnated budget. NIH received only a 2% increase for the current fiscal year and the President has proposed a 1% decrease in the budget for NIH for the coming fiscal year. Other Federal Agencies are also facing decreases in their appropriations. Due to the magnitude of the Federal deficit, the long term outlook for even a modest increase in Federal funding for research is not very promising. This means the campus needs to diversify its portfolio for support as well as aggressively lobby for increased investments to support research.