

Faculty Senate – Budget & Planning Committee Meeting - Minutes

January 28, 2019 at 3:30 pm in Strong Hall 611

Attendees from FS B&P: Larry McKay, Ken Baker, Victor Ray, Beauvais, Tyler Wall, Joe Bailey, James Myers, Alex Rodrigues, Sean Schaeffer, Beth Schussler, Lou Gross

Attendees from Office of Research & Engagement and Office of Sponsored Projects: Robert Nobles, Interim VC Research, Bruce LaMattina, Kimberly Eck, Donna Cochrane, Jean Mercer, Erin Chapin, Marissa Moazen

Presentation by Robert Nobles, with numerous questions and discussion. Some of the following bullets are related to the slides (attached), with others related to questions asked by committee members.

Summary of UT Research Funding

FY18 was great for UT ORE, increased total research expenditures by 11%, nearly doubled increased participation in UG research by more than 50% over 2017, grew number of TT faculty who have external funding or submitted proposals to 54%, improved safety oversight for teaching laboratories, increased ranking for NEH fellowships to 11th place relative to other public or private universities, etc.

VolVision 2020 and recent ORE Priorities

- ORE is committed to continue working towards goals expressed in VolVision 2020. Change in UT leadership has not resulted in a change in these priorities, at least with respect to research.
- Priorities include recognizing contributions beyond sponsored research (like NEH fellowships), improved support for PI's in proposal preparation, increase student research opportunities, invest in research and information infrastructure
- About 1/3 of proposals submitted are funded, which is well above national average. Questions about improved proposal support at the college level Robert is interested in having ORE support this type of effort. They tried it several years ago, with some colleges responding enthusiastically. Big problem was that not all colleges had clear strategic plans for research. Nobles suggested Colleges talk to Kimberly Eck and Jean Mercer to discuss possible interactions.

2019-20 Action Plan for ORE (12 points)

- Focus on indicators of excellence, recognition of success, transdisciplinary research, promote government/industry/foundation partnerships, support for entrepreneurs & commercialization, improved proposal competitiveness, internal partnerships, expanding state/federal sponsorship, excellence in engagement, increase student research, improve infrastructure, culture of integrity & compliance

Post-doctoral Researchers

- Nobles said that recent task force (which included Marissa Moazen) on post doc research training made recommendations on training, socialization, community and hiring procedures (with HR input). Nobles said that number and success of post-docs is an important factor in institutional ranking.

- Concern raised that departments and colleges get very little direct credit for post-doctoral mentoring. As a result, PI's tend to focus on PhD students rather than post-docs. Request that ORE lobby UT administration to get post-docs counted as an important output for faculty, departments & colleges. Nobles said that Associate Deans of Research would need to help with this effort.

UG research support from ORE

- Nobles said that having UG research (Marissa Moazen) housed in ORE has greatly helped coordinated planning for this. It started in 2014, although some activities like EURECA and summer scholarships predate this.

ORE Budget

- Budget for ORE comes direct from central administration. Budget is not directly influenced by F&A rates or returns. Base budget is about \$4.5M, with other budget items like Additional Mission support (\$400K), STIR (\$1.75M), SARIF (\$904K), Joint Institutes (\$1.3M), Startup (\$5.6M), Bridge funding (\$330K), cost share (\$1.5M), & Science Alliance (\$5.4M – includes Gov Chairs). None of this comes directly from F&A. It all comes from Chris Cimino.
- Discussion of how ORE budget and practices might change if a hybrid RCM budget model is adopted. Not sure what the impact will be. Question about effective F&A rates – do they impact ORE? Not directly, but they do impact colleges and departments.
- Question about whether there is a procedure for overall evaluation of ORE expenditures or approaches? Nobles said there is not a systematic procedure for evaluation and there is a need for improvement. Led to discussion of NIMBIOS and Science Alliance (SA). Noble said Shawn Campagna is working on strategic plan for SA. Also discussed the advanced materials and manufacturing initiative (Obama era –related to auto manufacturing – large but a lot of the funds are pass-through and not much F&A).

Efforts to increase proposal submissions

- Had about 100 proposals to ORE for Seed Grants and they funded about 25 at total of \$1M cost. This replaced the Organized Research Unit (ORU) program and the seed grants have been much more successful.
- Question about ORE-UT System interactions. Nobles said it adds value, but system is very small. They look for areas where they can complement each other. Stacie Paterson's main focus is on ORNL. She helps lobby state for research building funds (Cherokee Farms). They don't trip over each other. System provides some funding to ORE. Noble sees value in System. They are terrific partners. System has representation (a part-time lobbyist) in DC, which is helpful. Bruce Lamatina recently took a group of faculty to DC to meet with congress and agencies.
- Growth in research expenditures. Biggest increase was from DOE, but had a corresponding decrease in NSF funds. DOD is small and flat, USDA is small and increasing slightly. Nobles said the decline in NSF funds (while NSF budget is increasing) is largely due to decreasing access in large grants (>\$10M each).

New ORE organizational structure

- Discussed staffing, new positions and pending hires
- National Institute for STEM Evaluation and Research (NISER) moving from NIMBioS to ORE

Research challenges

- Competitive environment, need to diversify, attract funds from corporations, foundations & philanthropy, culture of investigation and innovation, student research, culture of compliance and responsible conduct.
- Counterintelligence. Protecting assets of the university. Confucius Institute closure. Strong push for more domestic graduate students. Most of this comes from federal government, with some from state. Expect restrictions in the future.

Upcoming FSB&P meetings

- Feb 11
 - o Phil Fulmer, Athletics Director
- March 25
 - o Dixie Thompson, Dean of Grad School
- April 15
 - o David Manderscheid, Sr. VC and Provost