

3/16/22 – Research Strategic Growth Subcommittee Meeting

Via Zoom: Morris Foster, Barry Ezell, Michel Audette, Tina Gustin, Licheng Sun, Phil Reed, Liz Smith, Charles Sukenik, Ryan Klinger, Rodger Harvey, Doug Streit, Nancy Klein, Mecit Cetin, Saikou Diallo, Sachin Shetty, Tihomir Hristov, Shanan Chappell-Moots, Adam Rubenstein, Masha Sosonkina, Heather Richter, Tina Gustin, Daniel Campbell

VP Foster began the meeting with an overview of the work plan that will include identification of strategic goals, development of strategies to achieve those goals, and detail budget requests to carry out these strategies.

- The Challenges & Opportunities committee will be completing its report soon which will be provided to our group to factor into the strategic goals of our committee.
- VP Foster and Provost Agho, chair of the Scholarship Subcommittee, will communicate through the process so that both groups can work in tandem; will likely have Provost Agho and his co-chair attend some of our meetings

VP Foster continued the discussion of the two framing statement from the prior research strategic plan that the committee should continue to build upon:

- (1) ODU will become a model for leveraging regional opportunities in research, scholarship, and creative activities to build a national and international academic reputation.
- (2) Taking advantage of those regional opportunities, ODU will establish unique national and international excellence in specific domains — now defined broadly as maritime, data science, and health science.

The committee's conversation included the following points of discussion:

- We should continue to leverage our regional opportunities which have helped ODU over the past 8 years with funding support from Richmond and shown ODU to be the go-to academic partner in the region.
- ODU has an advantage over other universities from outside the region as we have already developed partnerships. These should be expanded on as the NSF and other federal funders are looking for community connections that are both public and private.
- We should also be engaging other higher education institutions, especially local partners
- The arts and humanities will be a part of our conversations and future plan
- Focusing on certain areas has benefitted ODU in the past and the three areas detailed in #2 will be the focus points of our plan; they are not exclusive but will be the top-level areas
- We need to think of things in the broadest context, especially related to data science, which incorporates all disciplines; the ultimate plan should be inclusive of everyone and provide direction across campus
- Faculty doing data science committee work will be contacted asked to share information which can inform our committee's work.
- As we develop our plan, we should look to create an atmosphere on campus where new areas of research can be encouraged, provide infrastructure & administrative elements to simplify things when new areas come about.

- We should look to create an environment where research & scholarship are able to survive and thrive in all disciplines.
- There was a discussion about whether the descriptor “maritime” was too narrow and if it adequately covered enough areas.
 - ❖ Maritime is used in this scenario as an adjective that is a modifier in numerous domains including resiliency, sustainability, transportation
 - ❖ There was a Maritime Study conducted last year which looked at maritime opportunities across the region, we will share this with the committee; the report has resonated well with our corporate partners and with the Commonwealth’s leadership

VP Foster posed the question, “What does it mean to be an R1 institution?”, which was followed by conversation with the committee.

- A question was raised about how R1 status will impact IDC and strategic investments
 - o IDC will not be taken back; ODU is willing to make investments when a case is made and there is a unique opportunity
- ODU has continued to work creatively, “Punching above its weight,”
- University leadership is being encouraged to increase stipends and doctoral support
 - o This is an important aspect that Carnegie considers
 - o Humanities and social sciences doctorates are another area that will benefit ODU going forward
- Technology needs to be considered and be infrastructure based; especially looking forward at how it will support research and leverage efficiencies
- People infrastructure should be considered as well; research facilitators can help increase the pace of research and lead to cross institutional collaborations
- There was a discussion of pulling together data including current research expenditures; these will be put together in summary form and shared with the committee
- Non-faculty researchers are an important component of R1 classification
 - o We should consider ways to make ODU a destination for external non-faculty researchers through programs like Fulbright
 - o There is a PowerPoint on the Teams site that provides a current breakdown of non-faculty researchers at ODU that includes VMASC, research faculty, Jefferson Lab, students with Ph. D’s
- We can work to create a culture change through strategic thinking in conjunction with the strategic plan; this will allow the strategic plan to be leveraged to make investments that will help maintain R1 status

The committee began a discussion around infrastructure which addressed the below elements.

- We should look to identify infrastructure broadly that can be build up and shared among colleges.
- A broad plan would be critical and allow ODU to sustain and expand by making research simpler and more efficient.
- Facilities are vital in the music and performance fields; currently much of their work has to done in community venues; increased funding support for these disciplines would enable ODU to be a leader in these areas
- Improvement in facilities will allow ODU to improve its recruiting of students and become more competitive

The committee continued its discussion addressing faculty areas:

- Working to make ODU a research friendly institution will assist with recruitment of talented faculty and will continue to elevate our reputation
- The role of research faculty & postdocs and their promotion opportunities and review process was discussed.
 - o This has been a continued area of effort and recently research faculty became eligible to join the Faculty Senate.
 - o Research faculty tenure process should be examined and made similar to tenure track process
- Faculty salaries were discussed
 - o ODU starting salaries are not competitive
 - o ODU has revised its peer institutions to R1 schools and we are now showing that our salaries and stipends are below our peers
- Research leave policies and reporting need to be clarified
- Conversations about doctoral students' benefits need to continue (insurance, child care)
- Increased funding for doctoral students should be addressed; some programs could bring in many more qualified students if their funding levels were higher; this will help in maintaining R1 status

The committee continued its discussion addressing startup companies/businesses coming out of university settings.

- Many R2 to R1 schools have had success with startups coming from students and faculty
- We need to make sure research commercialization is part of our effort, showcase successes, consider potential partners
- We should consider ways to help encourage growth from a lab to center to business
- We should also look to develop a startup culture with a pipeline of staff who are Ph D's and postdocs
- ODU needs to consider systemic change to enable many types of research
 - o Darden College of Education & Professional Studies does a considerable amount of contract work with the Dept. of Education
 - o Education produces more doctorates than any other area on campus (60 last year)

VP Foster posed the topic of possible working groups for the committee. Three were proposed in the agenda:

- Post-R1 culture change
- Goals for funded research
- Goals for arts & humanities

The committee continued its discussing addressing this topic area.

- Now that we have R1 status we need to consider the next stretch goal? There is not a defined standard once you attain R1 so we have to create it. We should consider how we move to the next higher quadrant.
- Currently there are eight schools lower than us; since quadrants are based on comparisons to other schools this is a moving target with the possibility of moving backwards
- Increasing the number of doctorates awarded is key to improving our level

- A mentoring structure/program for graduate/doctoral students was in development prior to the pandemic and should be restarted as it would be a benefit to those students
- ODU has made significant investments in secure research infrastructure; we should consider expanding the focus in areas that require it
- CUI requirements are becoming a part of NIH applications and will likely spread into other federal funding agencies; some universities have made their entire system CUI compliant

VP Foster concluded the meeting asking committee members to think about, “What does it mean to be an R1 institution?” in advance of the next meeting. A Teams folder has been created for members to share their thoughts with the group. He also asked members to consider what kinds of change and investment does ODU need to make going forward.