

Subject: College of Sciences Monday Matters: Research
Date: Monday, October 5, 2020 at 8:04:24 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Dodge, Gail
To: Dodge, Gail
CC: Whitfield, Tiffany L.
Attachments: Trends FY20.pdf

Dear Colleagues:

I thought it would be useful to give you an update on research in the college, especially since there was no State of the College presentation this year. Of course all the complications related to COVID-19 are having a big impact on our research activity. Not only were many faculty and students unable to work in their labs for several months, but lab activity is still affected by the need to maintain social distance and decrease occupancy of lab spaces. On top of that, increased teaching loads this Academic Year will definitely have an impact on our research productivity in FY21. At some point constrained budgets may also start to affect grants awarded. Based on preliminary numbers from ODURF it seems that our research expenditures and awards are a bit down in FY20 (see attached). However, new faculty are getting funded and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics crossed over the threshold of \$1 million in expenditures in FY20. Of course a critical measure of research productivity is papers published in high impact journals, which should be easy to monitor but isn't.

It seems to me that the college can support the research of our faculty in at least three ways. The first is to provide and prioritize research infrastructure. You may know that Kevin Mitchell, the COS machinist who worked in the Engineering shop, has left for another job. His position will remain vacant for now, but my intention is to fill that position as soon as we are allowed to do so. In the meantime, I want you to know that **machine shop services are still available**. Kevin Mitchell will be working part-time and we also have a student worker, Sydney Fletcher. If you need any assistance from Kevin or Sydney, the procedure is the same as before - simply submit your work request to the "Batten College Model Shop" on ServiceNow.

Secondly, we can look for opportunities to buy equipment that can be used by many faculty and to assist in servicing and maintaining that equipment. This year (AY20-21) we were allocated more than \$1.3 million in equipment from the Equipment Trust Fund. Most of that will go to satisfy startup obligations, replace computer equipment, and provide critical equipment for teaching. However, we have been able to buy a modest amount of equipment for research as part of our ETF allotment over the years. The harder question, to which I have no answer yet, is how to purchase expensive equipment (\$100 K and up) that is needed to replace aging but critical items.

Finally, we can continue and hopefully expand our use of seed funding to promote new research collaborations in interdisciplinary, priority areas, emphasizing preparation for major funding proposal submissions. We provided seed funding last year to increase collaboration across campus in the area of biomedical sciences. The Multidisciplinary Biomedical Research Seed Finding (MBRSF) will run again this year, with a call for proposals coming out soon. I hope we can apply this same model to other areas, such as data science or research related to the Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience (ICAR).

However, all of this takes money and our IDC allocation has been dropping over the past couple of years. The formula for distributing money to the College, the Department and the individual PIs has not changed, but the amount of IDC available to be distributed has been decreasing. There are several reasons for this, including more money being returned to the state, the creation of a Research Investment Fund (which has benefitted us), and increases in the Intellectual Property Fund. I plan to dig into this further in the next

month.

Please contact me if you have suggestions for ways that we can support the research enterprise in our college. Also, I want to thank Rodger Harvey who has been overseeing the process of applying for research restart approval. He has been working hard on our behalf and has been an effective advocate with the Office of Research.

Best Regards,
Gail

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