

**Engaging Research, Scholarship, and Creative Expression
Forum #1, December 2, 2016**

Attendees

Kendall Martin; Debbie Mohammed; Emily Monroe; Anthony Bundy; Michele Cascardi; Kevin Martus; David Gilley; Jane Bambrick; Amy Learmonth; Megan Geerds; Marty Becker; Jonathan Foley; Corey Basch; Steve Betts; Joseph Spagna; Emmanuel Onaivi; Karen Swanson; Nicole Davi; Jai Menon; Pamela Theus; Tao Guo; Klive Oh; SoYon Rim; Carey Waldburger; Martin Williams; Christine Bravo; Toufic Hakim; Kathy Weiner; and Stephen Hahn

Action Steps Selected at the End of the Forum

(For each step, the group voted on “I” for important and “U” for urgent. The results are indicated below.)

- 1) Quantify and recognize the reward for mentoring and managerial duties to students – I
- 2) Train grad assistants as researchers and have a parallel program for undergraduates - I
- 3) General contractor or coordinator for post-award management - U
- 4) Recognize and appreciate faculty involved in original research with students, verbally; released time (allow faculty to decide to allocate as 6 credits in one semester versus 3 per semester; fully reimbursed travel assistance) – I; U
- 5) Restructure ART: give it to junior faculty for entire tenure period; allow faculty to decide to allocate as 6 credits in one semester versus 3 per semester – I; U
- 6) Recognize and understand that the original research that puts students first affects retention and enrollment (explicit acknowledgement) – I; U
- 7) Provide a defined set of RSCE expectations from the University, the Colleges, and the departments. Recognize differences between WP and other institutions. - I
 - Define and articulate the expectations for scholarly outcomes including but not limited to student engagement and student outcomes, publications and other scholarly outcomes, and funding in a way that allows for recognition that is flexible for the diversity of disciplines
- 8) Centralize, simplify and standardize travel funds – one central location to apply and transparency about the amount of money – I U

- 9) Administration to acknowledge the value of both the effort of preparing and submitting an application for external funding – I
- 10) OSP needs to provide information to the new faculty about institutional resources - I
- 11) Create a package for junior faculty that includes a research mentor, clearly define start up resources, and information on additional available resources (online resources, etc.) – I U
- 12) Discuss/decide how to leverage our status as Hispanic-serving, military serving, etc. as “broader impacts”

Table Conversations

Each table had approximately 45 minutes for a discussion centered around a specific recommendation from the reports. The result of the group table discussion was to be five recommendations related to the topic.

The following are the notes taken while the conversations took place.

Table 1: Stewardship – Improve the coordination and stewardship of research across the University.

Centralized

No person available to coordinate when grants come in

Money for additional positions

Masters studies

Career development

Grant management –an issue

To coordinate across university-

Signatures on grant applications- centralized electronic signature (imperative)

Vendor agreements

Spend down of funds in financial year

Administrator for (department level - dean office, OSP)- part of 56% indirect costs

P card – for immediate expenses

Communication between Purchasing and Accounts payable

FT position at administrative level

Unable to obtain money for participant incentives

Recognition for managing labs that

increase participation by students in research (faculty mentoring)

Actionable Items

- 1) Staffing
- 2) Leadership
- 3) Coordination
- 4) P level- post award credit card connected to university account
- 5) Competitive awards at the college and university level to support research

3 Steps for Move Forward

1. Quantify mentoring managerial duties
2. Train grad assistants as researchers

Table 2: Focus on Faculty – Be more attentive to research needs of junior faculty.

Discussion of “how is research defined”?

“most important outcome” – alignment with mission – create and expand the boundary of knowledge – should it be student centered or faculty centered? How to balance the two?

- We agree that the articulation of the definition of research is not entirely clear
- How is the value of student involvement recognized? How does this recognition counterbalance the compromises faculty make with respect to traditional measures of productivity (number or frequency of publications?)

Recommendation:

- (1) ART should be automatic for junior faculty (i.e. guaranteed until tenure)
- (2) flexibility should be allowed in terms of how release time is utilized (i.e. 6 credits for 1 semester as an alternative to 3 credits per semester for 2 semester)
- (3) Increased support for faculty travel is imperative.
 - a. Important experience for students to travel to conferences, etc WITH faculty
 - b. Important for faculty to have support to travel to maintain/increase visibility of WPUNJ and for personal career development
- (4) Increased clarity in definition(s) of research and creative expression as expressed in mission statements/university vision
- (5) Clearly defined start-up support
- (6) Include RSCE as separate component to new faculty orientation

Action Items:

1. Define and articulate the expectations for scholarly outcomes including
 - a. Student engagement and student outcomes
 - b. Publications and other scholarly outcomes
 - c. Funding

In a way that allows for recognition of the different needs, timescales, and diversity of research outcomes that exist within each discipline

2. Create a package for junior faculty that includes a research mentor, startup funds, and information on available resources for faculty
3. Restructure ART to allow
 - a. Junior faculty to have guaranteed ART for entire tenure period
 - b. Faculty to choose to allocate release time in 6 hrs/semester for 1 semester or 3 hrs/semester for 2 semesters

Table 3: Funding – Work strategically to strengthen the culture of research funding.

General reactions to the five bullet points

More transparency in the recommendations; recommendations didn't go where the faculty wanted them to go

Strengthen cultural of funding –

Example: Wait to apply for a grant until tenured – most of the places you can apply fund 3 to 5% of proposals; afraid of spending six months writing a proposal would be six months lost doing “safe” research

Some faculty put grant proposals on their CV but not everyone thinks that is practice

Junior faculty – show them that's there a reward and not a cost for submitting a proposal

Tenure process appeared that it was too scary – did “safe” publishable research and waited to apply for a proposal; tenure provides freedom to do something out of the ordinary

Support funding from the beginning; even if you don't get funded, this will count for something – it will help with tenure

How does this translate into what can be implemented?

Communicated from the Chair and Dean?

More recognized

Junior faculty had ideas for fundable projects and work collaboratively – generally positive response from the Chair and Dean – made sure that the time and effort would be supported; never felt negative pushback and it wouldn't take away from teaching and service; no documentation just conversations that applying for funding would be supported

More widespread (consistent) amongst Colleges; some faculty get a sense that funding might hurt chances to publish which counts for tenure

Will the efforts that don't get funded count for effort

Faculty in departments with fewer faculty have challenges due to lack of resources and larger expectations to teach (previous faculty did not receive release time in their first year); messages needs to come higher than department chair

Survey results are potentially skewed due to imbalanced responses

Be careful of interpretation of the survey results

Grants; untenured faculty and their fears; recognition of external efforts

Internal summer or travel funding process at WP - varies by school

COSH – summer funding for everyone but leans towards junior faculty; years not enough people applied then senior faculty received it; external peer reviewed process (evaluation criteria) need to apply for external funding within two years; require a report

CHSS – summer funding junior faculty only; committee internal faculty members; Dean provides the money; College's indirect funds pool; treated as additional salary; be prepared to present

Internal funding is too limited – aim at the people who are under the most intense pressure – aimed at the junior faculty –

Significant effort to look for internal funding for

Reward for senior faculty for effort

Essential goal of a research culture is quality research data and be able to high impact publications that will involve students; culture does not support pre- and post-doctoral research opportunities (no policies, no ideas, etc.); goal in which we could have to attract these type of funds

Need funding for meaningful research

ART – what can be shown from ART? 3 credits ART for long term but what are the results? ART is just release time – not sufficient - need other funding for students or supplies

Vary discipline to discipline – 3 credits is not a lot – some are used to running a lab without too many resources – need to take in account what the discipline is and what the needs are

Blanket policy might not be the best bet – acknowledging that different fields need different types of support

Specific fields – may only have a single faculty member who is working in that discipline – send that out for external review; promote flexibility

ART needs accountability – faculty have different focus and that's okay. Some don't apply to ART or some don't get approved

Some programs do not have a doctoral program; what kind of funding or resources are in place; most only have a Master's program

No policy on post-doctoral training or funding for additional costs such as fringe benefits

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Make the guidelines/rubric/evaluation criteria for ART discipline specific; the needs of the type of the research should be taken into account because more tangible research related resources may be needed; flexible and accommodating but follow up in terms of accountability is also important
- 2) Pursuing funding activities need to count for something; no fear that the effort will not be recognized; effort should be rewarded; safety for junior faculty and encouragement for senior faculty; be communicated clearly that even unsuccessful grant applications need to be documented as part of the tenure process (Provost's Office)
- 3) Travel costs should be based on actual costs related to meetings; more cohesive funding source and need to be realistic for the type and location of meeting

Lunch Conversation - Action Steps

Centralize, simplify and standardize travel funds – one central location and transparency about the amount of money

Promote the effort of grant writing as something of value – what is the step? Administration to communicate the value of the application and the effort

Administration to communicate the value of the application and the effort

OSP needs to provide information to the new faculty about institutional resources

Leverage our status as Hispanic-service, military service, etc. as “broader impacts”

Table 4: Environment – Endeavor to make the WP work environment more hospitable for research.

Give special consideration to, and take advantage of, opportunities that combine research and scholarship inside the classroom, and that are interdisciplinary or community oriented

College specific newsletters to highlight research that will promote interdisciplinary research

More events to highlight research

Give time to faculty who develop a course with a research component

How to recognize and reward faculty who involve students in their research?

College specific newsletter

Provide more support for meeting presentations

Articulate how research will be assessed and contribute to tenure/promotion decisions

Utilize and promote summer as a resource for RSCE.

Fragmented time.

Allow ART to be awarded for more than 3 credits per semester (i.e. 6 credits Fall semester and 0 credits Spring semester)

Table Presentations

Five (5) minutes was allotted for presentation; a few minutes were added for questions and comments before moving onto the next table

Table 1 – Stewardship

The University doesn't recognize the effort of those who are running a lab – outputs (posters, papers) – the recognition hasn't been adequate

Grants focused discussion – challenges and struggles at pre- and post-award level – need more support and help; not enough individuals to help especially once a grant is received; post-award support to coordinate a variety of tasks (can describe the challenges and frustrations – AP, legal review, signatures, etc. nuts and bolts – “moving target” – not coordinate – a lot of time for faculty that could be spent doing the intellectual work).

Electronic signature system for signatures – free up time and burden (both pre- and post-award)

ART – additional funding streams to evaluate research proposals; two level internal review process for research awards; summer grant funding half of the money upfront other half at the time you submit the award; build on research funding for untenured faculty – small proposals capped at \$4K year, best proposals in advance; select number of awards – pilot or seed money

More post-award coordination through OSP

Is it a bigger issue with how the money is appropriated or that it's not enough money?

How to remove the disconnect?

Table 2 – Focus on Faculty

Faculty don't all have the same research needs

ART being automatic for junior faculty streamlines the process since they submit for review every year anyway

Different perceptions of student centered research

Faculty centered research is not incompatible with student centered research; design student research programs that can lead to faculty publications – rate or frequency of publication will be different – how do you reward the different types of experiences

More beneficial for students to facilitate research that result in various recognized outcomes; research program always faculty driven

Table 3 – Funding

- 1) Grant application endeavors should count for something especially for junior faculty – widespread fear because of the effort not counting towards tenure (add to review process)
- 2) Travel costs need to be realistic and easy to obtain (one central place for approval)
- 3) ART should be evaluated differently and need of resource
- 4) No policy or funding for supporting pre and post-doctoral fellows

Comments or questions: ART used to come with additional funding that was cut - \$250 for supplies then \$150 then nothing – would that be an added incentive for ART? Support real research costs and not just time; depends on the discipline

Table 4 – Research Environment

Need more time to do the research; promote interdisciplinary and classroom research (more visible across the University); recognize, reward, and appreciate, and measure research efforts (more support for presentations) and contribute to tenure promotion – what does the administration want us to be? Leaders in the field? Need to provide the resources or don't provide and be clear on what is expected (fix the disconnect)

Expectations are unreasonable based on our type of institution; never have what a research institution will – don't pretend we can compete – can't do as well but not minor league to major league – it's a different sport – articulate reasonable expectations so that they can read and

Fragmented time – unbalance each semester (6 credits in Fall and 0 credits in the Spring)

Overview/General Conversation

Further conversation was held during the table reporting and prior to the lunch conversations

Resources are an issue – can't just say we need resources b/c they cost money

Purpose – come up with tangible ideas and come up with a way to convince the U to change directions and get where we want to go – answer is not give us money – what is the compelling idea that can be presented to the administration???? Then comes resource allocation.

What can WP become? What do you envision the research culture to be? What's specific to this University? Budget issues – absence of budget – limited resources – can't envision due to the limitations – impossible puzzle – complicated thing – put the funding issue aside – realize

the constraints – unionized campus – State funded – can't fix them here – in an ideal world what do you want us?

Put the students first – student centered – faculty can mentor – students can be co-author's on papers – no money to present at conferences – ignore the money – 70 grad assistants that go to admin positions – reconceptualization of the GA model – give them opportunities for scholarship and learning – enhance the value of their education – actionable items we are looking for – congruency/consistency – strategy that will drive the whole culture – undergraduate as well but limited resources – demand a lot because they can't have a lot of the faculty member's attention – more than three independent study students can make a class but then things get lost (this is not putting students first) – issues related to retention, alumni, recruitment, etc. students who are involved in research are more likely to graduate and stay connected to the institution

Hire alumni as project staff (technician, part-time research assistant, etc). How can this be done at an institutional level (not the same as the GA process). It helps the faculty stay productive and also keeps the alumni connected to the institution.

RA process – scholarship for undergrads, etc. approaching a full-time skilled professional – don't have 15 hours a week realistically – mechanism to achieve this would be helpful – bump in productivity

10K students – 5 years – 400 faculty members – how many students can realistically work with each faculty member? Why is one is burdened down with 10 thesis students? School specific – how many majors?

Promoting student center research hinders getting a paper out

Select research type course where enrollment is capped

Awards for students that support student centered learning

Lunch Conversation

During lunch, the tables were charged with coming up with three steps that can be taken to move forward. The group was encouraged to think of actions that could be taken without additional funding. The list developed by the group is at the beginning for this report.