Report of the Research Committee
on the
Proposed Reorganization of the Office of Research

In early January 2015, the Provost tasked the Research Council with studying the organization structure of the Office of Research, as well as interrelated offices concerned with research, at Western Kentucky University. To that end, the Research Council set out to answer two interrelated questions:

1. What should be the focus of campus research with regard to internal and external resources?
   > RCAP, FUSE, Graduate Assistantships, and research within the colleges all require a robust funding structure drawn on limited resources. At the same time, the need in many disciplines for external funding is tied to internal funding as well as to infrastructure. This question addresses those issues.
2. What should the reporting structure for the Office of Research be moving forward?
   > The structure of the Office of Research as it has existed since 2010 may or may not be the appropriate model to achieve the research goals of staff, faculty, and students. This question addresses that issue.

We have spoken to these questions in the pages that follow, and our recommendations for each are contained in each section. However, the committee also felt the need to convey that while some fine-tuning and a more robust funding model are certainly welcome, our investigation found staff and faculty across campus, in offices, centers, institutes and the classroom carrying out an impressive research agenda that speaks to how far Western Kentucky University has progressed in the last five years. Faculty and staff have staged more productions, published more research, engaged undergraduates and graduate students their projects than ever before, and have been able to do so because of the financial support of the Office of Research, the Office of the Provost, their colleges, and their departments. So, this report contains suggestions and recommendations for a reorganization rather than a complete overhaul.

If there was a consistent message apart from the questions we address, it was a greater need for clear communication and for transparency. Open lines of communication will promote consistent messages and adherence to policies, while greater transparency will reassure staff, faculty, and students that WKU policies are clear and being followed.

The report of the University Senate Ad Hoc Committee focuses on a number of issues pertaining to faculty interests with regard to research. The Research Council supports many of the ideals set forth in that document and recommend that the Research Council and the Faculty Research Council continue to communicate on how best to implement the two visions.

SECTION 1
RESOURCES TO FACILITATE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

DEFINING THE ISSUE

In recent years, the academic environment at Western Kentucky University has evolved from one dedicated almost exclusively to teaching to one emphasizing a greater balance between teaching, research, and service. While WKU is still committed to excellence in the classroom, and indeed teaching will likely always encompass the largest part of the WKU faculty workload, the focus on increased research productivity has resulted in a need for more resources, in areas such as funding, space, graduate assistants, and support services. While soliciting external funding is certainly encouraged and often necessary, many, if not most, WKU faculty rely on internal mechanisms to assist them in carrying out their research. However, internal support across departments/schools and colleges is inconsistent, and internal support at the university level is viewed as limited and not structured to support adequately the faculty in all disciplines.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STATUS

Funding for faculty research comes from a variety of sources, including Department Heads/School Directors, Deans, college-level grant programs, and university-level mechanisms such as FUSE and RCAP. Additionally, faculty and staff apply for external funding from local, state, and federal sources, as well as from foundations and other private entities.

- Department Heads/School Directors fund research primarily through encouraging participation in the internal funding mechanisms, and then supplementing with DELO dollars, subject to availability.
- Deans provide research funding through start-up funds and/or college-level grant funding.
  - Information on start-up funding was difficult to collect and not all colleges responded, but start-up funding for new faculty across WKU varies by college. Neither Deans nor Department Heads/School Directors appear to have start-up funds allocated in their respective budgets, thus any start-up funding provided to new faculty is through DELO dollars. This DELO-based start-up may be provided by Deans, Department Heads/School Directors, or divided evenly between the two.
  - College-level grant funding is available in three colleges: CHHS, PCAL, and GFCB. Each of these colleges has a different model, with GFCB being limited to summer research funding and capped at $5,000 per faculty member. In a slight decrease from last year, in the current fiscal year PCAL budgeted $60,000 in scholarship development money, $17,000 in instructional development money, and $20,000 for faculty research grants, and each new faculty member received $2000 in start-up research funds from the college, matched by $1000 from the department. This is in addition to $20,000 for student travel, as well as matching funds for FUSE and RCAP applications. CHHS seems to be the most flexible with these programs with applications accepted in both fall and spring with a $4,000 cap per application (and can go as high as $6,000 if certain collaboration criteria are met). CHHS also has a semi-annual student funding opportunity for up to $750. CEBS, OCSE, UC, and UL do not have an internal funding mechanism for faculty research.

- The FUSE program (Appendix 2A) is a university-level funding mechanism supporting faculty-mentored undergraduate research. FUSE began in 2013 and is administered semi-annually. It is generally viewed as a successful program and one that has been effective in promoting increased emphasis on undergraduate research. However, there are legitimate criticisms of FUSE criteria and associated restrictions/limitations. This likely has held back the FUSE program from even greater utility by faculty and students.
- RCAP (Appendix 2B) was initiated in 2011 to replace the "old" FSA program (Appendix 1B). There are reported perceptions among WKU faculty that the FSA program was superior to the RCAP program in that there is less money available now and that the RCAP, whether it is the criteria, how it is structured, or how the applications are reviewed, is not compatible for some of our disciplines at WKU. The data over the last ten years (five years of FSA and five years of RCAP) reveal that that under RCAP there have been more research dollars requested, which may be due to the higher budget caps in RCAP compared to FSA, but the amount awarded in the five years prior to RCAP compared to the past five years under RCAP have been almost identical. However, regarding the question of flexibility and applicability across disciplines, the FSA was apparently a more versatile program and it is perceived strongly as being the program that was more inclusive of all disciplines.
- All of these internal resources are an important mechanism by which faculty and staff can improve their chances to receive external funding.

Research space

Research space and associated concerns was difficult to assess due to the vastly different needs across colleges and programs. However, information was acquired from most colleges and, not surprisingly, reflected a need for attention is some areas.
- Space is "at a premium" on the WKU campus. Academic buildings have all offices occupied and all classrooms in use. There is no additional space to expand research capabilities and, if space is identified, all construction costs must be absorbed either by a Dean or Department Head/Director and paid through DELO funds.
- Considering the volume of research being conducted at WKU, and the increased focus on research productivity, some programs' current facilities must be addressed.
  - Destruction of the North Wing of Thompson Science Complex, while necessary, has greatly contributed to this problem.
  - The research and creative activity facilities in FAC (Art, for example) are inadequate and in need of an upgrade.
  - CHHS has two units, PH and KRS, which have very research-active faculty, yet their facilities do not meet their needs.
- Space issues may not appear critical at first glance, but having inadequate space and/or working in a substandard lab has caused us to lose very talented faculty.
- On a more positive note, there is room for growth at the CRD and the WKU capital plan demonstrates a perceived priority to increasing academic space.
- WKU also has some very valuable additional sites away from campus that are used for research endeavors, such as the Green River Preserve and the McChesney Field Campus.

Graduate assistants

WKU has increased its emphasis on graduate education and now has over 80 graduate

programs, but there has not been a proportional increase in the number of graduate assistantships funded for departments/schools. This is particularly disturbing considering the associated increased emphasis on research productivity.

- WKU has have increased our number of graduate programs, and thus the number of graduate students, which of course necessitates more classes needing to be taught, along with a greater research expectation for faculty, yet graduate assistant funding has increased very little. Departments/schools must fund additional graduate assistants from their DELO funds.
- There is a disconnect between stipends and tuition waivers. All graduate assistantships should be fully funded with a monthly stipend for nine months (summer assistantships should be separate) and a full tuition waiver. This will make WKU much more competitive for the best graduate assistants.
- The Graduate School funding procedure for graduate student research and travel is confusing and inadequate.

Research support services

WKU provides several support services to assist faculty with their research endeavors. The Office of Sponsored Programs offers educational trainings, proposal development services, and the RISE and SOAR (proposed) programs for new faculty or faculty who are still early stage researchers. The WKU Research Foundation is also housed within the Office of Sponsored Programs. From their website, the Foundation purportedly "promotes financial flexibility, provides incentives for intellectual property opportunities, provides customized services for contracting with business and industry, and, most importantly, helps WKU to attract and retain quality researchers." However, it seems to serve primarily as a "flow through" entity for receiving external grants acquired by faculty and as a holding mechanism for F&A funds, of which it currently holds nearly $3 million. The Center for Faculty Development provides professional development services and programming for faculty in areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service. There are also many research-focused institutes and centers located at WKU that provide support for faculty research in a specific are of interest. Some of the institutes and centers have been approved by the Board of Regents, while some have not.

- Office of Sponsored Programs
  - RISE (Appendix 2C)
  - SOAR (proposed) (Appendix 2D)
  - Faculty/staff educational trainings (pre/post-award) (Appendix 2E)
  - Proposal development services (Appendix 2F)
  - WKU Research Foundation
- Center for Faculty Development (Appendix 2G)
- Research-focused Institutes and Centers (Appendix 2H)

General

The issue of research productivity and support reaches beyond the standard academic units on the main campus. Honors College, the Office of Scholar Development, Gatton Academy, and our Regional Campuses must be considered as well. Appendix 2I summarizes the perspective of research from each of these entities.

External Funding

Substantial internal research-focused investments in faculty and students that have been made over the past four years (RCAP, FUSE, Start up funds, etc.) have resulted in measurable positive impacts now visibly seen (increased student scholarship, REACH presentations, ROI from RCAP recipients, etc.) throughout campus, supporting the wide diversity of scholarship and creative activities at WKU. Recovery of external funding levels (2013/2014) following the economic downturn in 2009/2010 is occurring. Additionally, over the same time period, OSP and the individual colleges have invested significant staff resources in training and educational support for faculty development in research. Despite all of this support, however, many faculty members across campus generally feel that they need substantial additional resources above current levels (2014-2015) in order to be competitive for external. This is as much an issue of communication as the lack of a sense of shared responsibility to achieve a vision of sustained, high-quality research and scholarship productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding internal support for research, the overarching general recommendation is that the WKU administration needs to focus on measures to improve the overall quality of research at WKU. Currently, the perception is that WKU wants faculty to locate external funding and figure out research to fit that grant or contract. The committee believes this is the wrong approach and has led to many of the problems in our research structure. The committee believes that if we encourage a new focus on improving all aspects of the research environment for our faculty, and make it known that not only is "research productivity" a WKU priority, but also an equal priority is that WKU will ensure faculty have what they need to do their research (internal funding, adequate space, etc.), this "grassroots" approach will then almost certainly produce the desired outcomes of increased research quantity and improved research quality, thus leading to an increase in solicitation and, hopefully, acquisition of external grants and contracts. Here is a summary list of recommendations:

- Increase and provide better access to internal funding.
  - Continuation of the FUSE program, but with perhaps a revision to its multiple delimitations and deliverables.
  - Review the RCAP program against the former FSA program and explore the possibilities of an additional RCAP program that allows for more regular year-round funding.
  - There have also been requests for reviving the "new faculty scholarship" program, but if the SOAR program through the Office of Sponsored Programs is approved for launch, that would be a mechanism for new faculty to get immediate training in grant writing as well as the equivalent of a new faculty scholarship.
- Improve facilities and upgrade equipment where necessary.
  - Increase accessibility and usage of the CRD.
  - Identify research space in need of critical space or infrastructure improvements and formulate a plan to address those needs. Priority will be given to the programs who are more research-active.
  - Identify critical equipment needs and formulate a plan to address those needs. Priority will be given to the programs who are more research-active.
- Review and improve our graduate assistant program and structure to increase the quantity

quality of our graduate assistants and to make us more competitive in recruiting outstanding graduate assistants.
  - o Develop a plan to make all graduate assistantships full tuition and stipend.
  - o Systematically increase over the next ten years the number of full graduate assistantships to bring our absolute number up to meet our programs' needs.
  - o Ensure more equitable distribution of graduate assistantships across all programs.
  - o For some programs on campus, increased graduate assistantships helps bolster applications for external funding.
- Increase support of the Office of Sponsored Programs.
  - o Promote the RISE program
  - o Approve the SOAR program
  - o Allow them to broaden their educational trainings and development services by enlisting the expertise of on-site consultants to work with faculty on grant identification and writing.
- Provide a more clear and transparent definition of the role of the Research Foundation.
  - o Conduct an audit of currently held F&A funds and create a mechanism for unused F&A funds to be utilized by WKU for research purposes.
  - o Develop a structured mechanism for a portion of Foundation funds to be utilized for faculty start-up funding.
- Continue to support the Center for Faculty Development and increase its capabilities.
  - o Increase ability to consult with faculty on research design and statistical analysis.
  - o Increase the number and breadth of professional development opportunities.
- Increase focus on and capabilities for undergraduate research.
  - o Hire or relocate a staff member in/to the Office of Scholar Development, dedicated solely to coordinating undergraduate research, including overseeing FUSE, helping identify other research funding, serving as liason for the Student Research Conference, etc.
  - o Increase the number of Gatton students working with faculty in all colleges.
  - o Increase the number of Honors students working with faculty in all colleges and increase number of Honors theses.
  - o Create a plan to engage better the faculty at the Regional Campuses in the research mission of WKU.

Ultimately, it is a faculty member who initiates or mentors the scholarly work with support from the administration and staff (College, Department, OR, OSP, AA). Therefore, seeking of additional, external resources is a shared responsibility among the faculty, staff, and administration. The faculty, staff, and administration have shared burdens and mutual responsibilities to produce a quality educational experience for students. The committee feels that this collaborative culture must be fostered in research and scholarship so that the interests of the faculty member, department, college and university are aligned. Promotion of a focus on quality and supporting this with external funding benefits everyone. Indeed, funding will follow naturally as appropriate with careful mentoring and resource support by the University. Innovation and productivity are enhanced by a strategic and encompassing research program and culture focuses on quality and provides a framework for strategic investment of resources.

SECTION 2
PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH

DEFINING THE ISSUE

From 2010 through the end of 2014 the Office of Research at Western Kentucky University has been overseen by a Vice President for Research, who reported directly to the President. That structure carried with it a number of benefits, but may not be the best one suited to promote research and creative activities at WKU. The departure of the Vice President for Research provides an opportunity to reassess the reporting structure for research and creative activities at WKU.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STATUS

Prior to January 2015 the office of the Vice President for Research reported directly to the President. This reporting structure took effect in 2010 and represented a significant new direction for WKU. That reporting structure has included ARTP, graduate and undergraduate research, the offices of compliance, intellectual property, and sponsored programs, and some research centers. It also included the Office of Economic Development, comprised of the Center for Research Development, Research Marketing, the Small Business Accelerator, and the Small Business Development Center. During the interim Anne Mead, the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, has assumed control of the Office of Economic Development and its affiliated centers, while all other functions have fallen under the purview of the Provost. Cheryl Stevens, Dean of Ogden College of Science and Engineering, serves as the interim President of the WKU Research Foundation. All of these offices continue to function as they had before January 1, 2015, and most staff continue to perform the same duties.

COLLECTED INFORMATION AND DATA

To address the question of organizational structure going forward, the Research Council collected information on organizational structures from our benchmark institutions, as well as from a number of schools that various members of the Council viewed as "reflective of their particular colleges." Of course, questions of funding for research and creative activities, both internal and external, are not necessarily dependent on an organizational structure, and the issue of funding is addressed in a separate section. Moreover, our benchmark institutions are chosen because of a variety of factors, of which research and creative activities are one. For example, some benchmark offices of research are fairly well-funded, provide a great deal of internal money, and the faculty at those institutions bring in grants and contracts at a pace comparable to that of WKU. Nonetheless an analysis of our benchmark institutions gives us a good sense of what is out there, as well as a clear guidepost for moving forward.

The information from the benchmarks is mixed but reveals some clear patterns. First, two-thirds of the research positions at benchmark institutions report directly to the Provost. Of the one-third that do not, the University of South Alabama could be considered as having a more robust research agenda, and with a more active office of research than does WKU. The other universities where the office reports to the President are on par with WKU. Nonetheless, in general our benchmarks have an office of research that reports directly to the Provost.

The most common title for the office is "Vice," as related to the office to which the person reports. For example, this could be a Vice Provost reporting to the Provost, a Vice Chancellor reporting to the Chancellor, and so forth. A few exceptions exist, such as at Bowling Green State

University, Central Michigan, Illinois State, and Ohio University where the Vice President for Research reports directly to a Provost who is also a Vice President. Overall, there is no clear pattern to explain why the titles are aligned as such. Four positions carry the title of Dean, but in three of those cases the person is the Dean of hir Graduate School in addition to serving as VPR. In one case, at Indiana State, the job is a dean-level job and research/creative activities do not seem to be an important focus at that university. Finally, in two cases the descriptor "Associate" is used—once for an "Associate Provost, Research" and once for an Associate Vice Provost.

The Offices of Sponsored Programs, regardless of structure or name, are all housed within the Offices of Research at all of our benchmark institutions where data was readily available. Those duties generally included oversight of grant submissions and administration, as well as the oversight and administration of contracts. Most function as ours does.

Western Kentucky University has a number of centers and institutes, the reporting structure and purpose of which are not always clear to outsiders. At our benchmark and "reflective" institutions there seems to be a clear organizational structure wherein an office of research at least nominally oversees centers and institutes that conduct research, apply for internal and external funding, and represent themselves to the community at large on behalf of the university. These centers and institutes are often featured prominently on the home pages of offices of research, and have a clearly defined mission *vis-à-vis* research, creative activities, community outreach, research, grants, contracts, or some combination of these.

Offices of Economic Development are sometimes housed within offices of research, and are sometimes separate. The Division of Research and Economic Development at Bowling Green State University, for example, houses faculty and student research, as well as the Center for Regional Development (http://www.centerforregionaldevelopment.com/). Most of our benchmarks, however, have distinct "business accelerators" or "Centers for Economic Development" in the way that WKU does. These functions are assumed as part of grants, contracts, and creative activities, or are performed within the guide of centers dedicated to specific tasks.

Aside from Ohio University, where the Vice President for Research and Creative Activity and Dean of the Graduate College directs research, the Offices of Research rarely acknowledge "creative activity" in their titles. A few, like the Office of Research at Appalachian State University, make a statement on their webpage to the effect that "research, scholarship, and creative activity are fundamental to the mission of the university" (http://www.appstate.edu/research/), while BGSU's office "supports the scientific, scholarly, and creative research activities of the faculty" (www.bgsu.edu/research-economic-development.html). Similarly, the webpage for the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships at Northern Illinois promotes "research, scholarship, artistry and entrepreneurship across [their] campus" (http://www.niu.edu/divresearch/index.shtml). In the main, however, "creative activity" does not seem to be a primary function of the Offices of Research at our benchmark and "reflective" institutions. Under Gordon Baylis WKU has been a leader in this area.

Undergraduate and graduate research is directed through the Office of Research at our benchmark institutions, with the latter conducted in close cooperation with the Office/Dean of Graduate Studies at each institution.

Overall, Ohio University in Athens, OH, seems to most closely resemble our earlier research incarnations, with an Office of Research and Creative Activity and Dean of the Graduate College reporting to a Provost, and that promotes research as well as creative activity, houses a Center for

Entrepreneurship, various centers and institutes, their Office of Sponsored Programs, and internal and external funding initiatives.

The Appendix 3   is a list of benchmark institutions and their organizational structures with regard to research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following models serve as four potential ways to organize the reporting structure for the Office of Research going forward, based on the structures found at our benchmarks and "reflectives." Specific committee recommendations follow the four models. In each of these models we have utilized the term Vice Provost/Assistant Vice President (VP/AVP) as a convenience, not as a recommendation of title.

Model One:
  VP/AVP for Research and Creative Activity and Director of Economic Development. This person would report directly to the Provost, and would be responsible for all of the duties held by the previous Vice President for Research.

  This model follows the previous structure, with the exception of creating a new position of Vice Provost/Assistant Vice President position to replace the previous Vice President. It carries with it the convenience of housing all the previous external funding initiatives in the same office. However, the economic development components are not clearly linked to the mission of internal and external funding. Moreover, while some of the components of the Office of Economic Development are research-related, most are not related to faculty, staff, or student research.

Model Two
  VP/AVP for Research and Creative Activity. This person would report directly to the Provost and would be responsible for all of the duties held by the previous Vice President for Research, except that the Office of Economic Development and its associated centers and functions, would remain with the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration.

  This model mirrors the current interim structure, with the exception of creating a new position of Vice Provost/Assistant Vice President position to replace the previous Vice President. It carries the benefit of separating the research and economic development components of the Office of Research, allowing that office to focus on faculty, staff, and student research without the additional burden of managing economic development.

Model Three
  VP/AVP for Research and Creative Activity. This person would report directly to the Provost and would be responsible for all of the duties held by the previous Vice President for Research, except that the Office of Economic Development, and its associated centers and functions, would remain with the Senior Vice President for

Finance and Administration. The Office of Sponsored Programs would report directly to the Provost.

This model closely mirrors the current interim structure with the exception of creating a new position of Vice Provost/Assistant Vice President position to replace the previous Vice President, and with OSP reporting directly to the Provost. It carries the benefit of reducing the administrative burden on the VP/AVP, possibly only requiring a part-time administrative position. However, a part-time VP/AVP for research has the potential to send a negative signal about the place of research at WKU. Moreover, having OSP report directly to the Provost could lead to communication problems between the Office of Research and OSP and increases the management burden on the Provost.

Model Four

Assistant Vice Provost/Dean of Research and Creative Activity. This model would place an additional layer of reporting between the Office of Research and the Provost. The responsibilities of any of the previous three models could be inserted here. The benefits of this model are that, as in model three, the position could be considered a part-time administrative position, with associated cost savings and reduced administrative bloat. The drawbacks are the same as in the third model.

Committee Recommendations:

First, the most recent organizational structure of the Office of Research does not suit the needs of faculty or administration going forward, and therefore this committee recommends that the current position of Vice President for Research be eliminated and replaced with a position that reports directly to the Provost. From a fiscal standpoint this will save money and reduce administrative costs at the Vice President level. It would also place research within the context of academics, provide greater efficiencies, flexibility and send a more positive message about the role of research at WKU. In that context it will also shift a widely perceived emphasis on research and creative activities as a means to "bringing in dollars," to one where research and creative activities are concinnitous with teaching.

Second, data from the benchmarks and "reflectives" suggests that the title of the position is important, but mainly in the negative. That is, heading up the office of research and creative activities should not be left to a dean- or director-level position. The title of Dean will not convey the importance of research and creative activities at WKU. Moreover, adding another layer of reporting between the Provost and the Office of Research—such as an Associate Vice Provost— regardless of funding level or autonomy, will send a negative signal about the place of research at WKU. This committee recommends a position that reports directly to the Provost, with a title of Vice Provost, Associate Vice President, or other title based on university norms.

Third, the funding of research and creative activities requires a "go-to" office to help faculty and staff assess, prepare, submit, and manage grants, the Office of Sponsored Programs continues to serve a critical function at WKU. Data from our benchmarks shows that various offices that are either called "Office of Sponsored Programs," or fulfill the same functions but

carry a different name, report to a head of research who in turn reports directly to either a Provost or President. <u>This committee recommends that the Office of Sponsored Programs should be housed in the Office of Research and Creative Activities, with the head of OSP reporting to the head of the Office of Research</u>.

Fourth, given the wide mandate of the ARTP <u>this committee recommends further study regarding where to locate that office in the future, whether it be in the Office of Research or returning it to Ogden College</u>.

Finally, <u>this committee recommends that the Research Council take up two tasks in the next year</u>. The first should be to develop a clear mission statement with regard to research. This will help the Office of Research focus its efforts and provide faculty and staff with a better understanding of its purpose. The second task should be to conduct a thorough review of all centers and institutes on campus in order to have a better idea of which are concerned with research, which are concerned with public outreach, and how the university can better support the mission of each of these centers. At the same time many Centers are not self-sustaining but with the support of the Office of Research could become so.