Date: March 29, 2005

To: Sponsored Research Advisory Committee (SRAC)

From: Sandra Flake, Provost

Re: Response to “Initiatives and Incentives for Enhancing Sponsored Research Activities”

Last year, the SRAC was charged to review the recent trends in sponsored research productivity at UWF and to recommend initiatives for enhancing the generation of external support for research and training programs, including incentives for success in securing such support. The SRAC finalized its report on December 8, 2004.

I very much appreciate the work that went into the report and its recommendations. I plan to provide your report and my response to the Faculty Senate for information after I have the opportunity to review it with the Sponsored Research Advisory Committee and get your responses.

It is my intention that several of the initiatives and incentives recommended by the SRAC will be implemented promptly, whereas the others requiring further deliberations in concert with strategic planning will be considered in due course.

Initiatives to Recognize, Reward, and Retain Faculty with High Productivity in Sponsored Research Programs

1. **Expectations for securing extramural support for research and training need to be clearly defined and recognized in relation to merit increases, tenure, and promotion.** This recommendation requires a review of existing criteria at departmental, college, and university levels. Since expectations for productivity and outcomes in scholarly and creative activities vary with the departments, additional deliberations need to occur to ensure proper recognition of productivity in sponsored research programs. The review of promotion and tenure criteria and procedures is a matter under discussion with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

2. **Provide Sponsored Research Administrative Supplements (SRAS) as salary increments for faculty demonstrating high productivity in sponsored research programs.** Sponsored Research Administrative Supplements, up to 10% of base salary, may be provided to faculty demonstrating high productivity in sponsored research programs. These supplements would be term-limited (three years), rotational, and renewable based on sustained productivity. Factors such as magnitude and source of funding (e.g., peer reviewed, competitive, federal grants), project outcomes (publications and reports), and research participation and training opportunities for students will be considered. Recommendations for the SRAS will be made by department chairs and center/institute directors for approval by appropriate Dean and Provost. Eligibility: faculty in state-funded positions. Implementation date: next contract period.

3. **Replace the single Distinguished Research and Creative Activities Award with at least 4 awards per year – to be awarded through campus-wide competition, with at least two of the awards ear-marked for productivity in sponsored research and training programs.** As recommended, four Distinguished Research and Creative Activities Awards ($3,000 each) will be made available per year through campus-wide competition. At least two of these awards will be awarded to faculty demonstrating high productivity in sponsored research and training programs. Faculty with distinguished records of achievements would be eligible to win these awards once

4. **Initiate an incentive program based on salary savings generated through external grants.** For faculty in state-funded positions, up to 50% of the salary savings generated during the year (academic or calendar year, for 9-month and 12-month employees) may be returned to the faculty member in the form of “seed funds.” To be eligible for receiving such seed funds, salary savings must be generated through external grants/contracts (excluding those from State of Florida agencies) which provide appropriate F & A costs at the maximum allowable rate or a negotiated rate approved by the university. Recommendations on seed fund distribution will be made by department chairs and center/institute directors for approval by appropriate Dean or Provost. Eligibility: faculty in state-funded positions. Implementation date: July 1, 2005.

5. **Revise the formula for distributing the recovered F&A costs, with an aim to increase the share to the Principal Investigator in relation to the amount of recovered F&A costs—provided that the F&A costs are recovered at the maximum allowable rate for the pertinent granting agency.** Effective FY 2004-2005, the PIs share of F & A costs will be as follows: share of 10% (for F&A costs recovered up to $25,000); 12.5% ($25,000 to $50,000); 15% (> $50,000). The increases noted in the two latter cases, will be offset by proportional reductions in distributions made to the unit (department or center/institute) and to the college or division. The current allocation of 70% distributed to Sponsored Research Trust Fund will remain unchanged.

6. **When making faculty assignments for tenure-track and tenured faculty participating in sponsored research and training programs, chairs consider that state-funded effort be apportioned as 50% for research and 50% for teaching and other activities.** Providing such assignments across the board on a long-term basis would be difficult, because of issues related to resources and departmental needs. Allocation of increased effort (50%) for research as part of a start-up package in support of newly recruited faculty, for a defined time period in concert with expectations in sponsored research productivity, is feasible and may be recommended at the Department level for Dean’s approval.

7. **Reduce campus-based administrative burdens for faculty during proposal preparation and post-award monitoring.** The incoming Associate Vice President for Research/Dean of graduate Studies will work with the Office of Sponsored Programs and implement appropriate processes to reduce campus-based administrative burdens, and facilitate orderly and timely compliance with the expectations of funding agencies.

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**Identify and Support Faculty with Potential For Securing Extramural Support**

SRAC’s suggested actions included:

1. Deans, directors, and chairs identify faculty whose potential for securing external support has not been fully explored (and who did not receive notable intramural support).

2. Review and provide on an individual basis the assistance needed – i.e., mentoring, financial support, student assistance, released time, and collaborative opportunities – for proposal submission.

3. Earmark at least 50% of the currently disbursed intramural support for research (small grants and summer stipends) towards the above selected faculty, with appropriate oversight and mentoring targeted towards the development of successful proposals.

4. Participation in interdisciplinary endeavors, collaboration with Centers/Institutes and with other institutions, and strengthening/sharing of core facilities should be encouraged.
I plan to discuss the above recommendations with the Deans and explore means by which administrative input will be included in identifying and supporting faculty with potential for success in sponsored research and training programs.

**Recruit, Support, and Retain Additional Research Oriented Faculty in Selected Disciplines**

SRAC’s suggested actions included:

1. As new faculty positions are created, an appropriate share of these positions should be targeted to recruit research-oriented faculty in selected areas.

2. Recruitment of tenure-track or tenured faculty with joint appointments in an academic department and an appropriate center/institute may be an effective approach in some cases.

3. The institution needs to establish reserve funds (possibly through foundation sources) to be able to offer competitive start-up packages and early career development support for newly recruited faculty.

4. Besides the start-up packages of support, research-oriented faculty should be given adequate time (50% time) for research during the academic year to ensure that their potential to engage in an externally-funded research program is realized.

5. The existence of programs to recognize, reward, and retain faculty with high productivity in extramural grants/contracts would be an asset for recruitment and retention of high caliber faculty.

I agree with the above recommendations in principle. The identified issues will be considered in relation to the strategic planning process. Efforts will be made to provide a reasonable start-up package of support, including adequate time for research, during early stages of career development for incoming faculty.

**Centers and Institutes**

SRAC’s suggested actions include:

1. Review and strengthen productive Centers/Institutes that are integral for the mission of the university.

2. Through strategic planning, identify areas of focus for the creation of new Centers/Institutes.

I support these with these recommendations in principle. Since the centers/institutes have been the major contributors of sponsored research productivity at the university, special attention has to be focused on the needs of these units for their continued success and enhanced productivity.