



Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Date: May 21, 2008
To: UNT Faculty
From: Vish Prasad, Vice President for Research and Economic Development
Re: Updates and New Initiatives

Since joining UNT in October 2007, I have been greatly impressed by the quality, breadth and relevance of research conducted by UNT faculty, by their scholarship, creativity and innovation, and by their collegiality and collaboration. As I have expressed on many occasions, my primary responsibility is to work with you to promote UNT's mission in research, original scholarship and artistic creativity by developing and implementing a campus-wide strategic and operational plan to support these efforts.

During the last six months, there have been many changes in the Office of Research and Economic Development that I would like to share with you. In collaboration with the Faculty Research Committee, the Provost, and the Deans, we have worked diligently to make changes in the organization, structure, functions, and programs to promote efficiency and research funding. We are creating workshops and training sessions designed to aid faculty in gaining more external support and we are also developing new and extended programs that will encourage collaborative research and establish UNT as a premier research institution.

Reorganization of the Office

- **Expanded Role of this Office:** The functionality of this office has been expanded beyond research services to an office that fosters and manages *Research Development, Research Services and Compliance, and Technology Transfer and Economic Development*. Please view the new organizational chart at <http://ored.unt.edu/docs/Orgchart.ORS.pdf>.
- **Liaison with Schools/Colleges, Departments and Faculty:** We have created two new Associate Vice President for Research positions to facilitate greater interaction with the colleges and schools. The AVPs will work closely with UNT Deans, Chairs, and faculty to improve grantsmanship, as well as with funding agencies, collaborating organizations, and other academic institutions to enhance UNT's research profile. The Associate Vice Presidents Dr. Ruthanne D. Thomas, Professor of Chemistry, and Dr. Kenneth Sewell, Professor of Psychology, are responsible for research development in the areas of natural sciences, engineering, and business; and humanities, social sciences, education, and the arts, respectively.
- **Research Development Team (RDT):** A team of professionals is being created to support UNT faculty in the development and writing of research, educational and training proposals to federal and state government agencies, industry, foundations, and non-profit organizations. One of the major tasks of the team will be to expand UNT's external funding, particularly federal research funding, to meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) criteria. The RDT will aid new and junior faculty,

support multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research teams, and manage diversity in the research enterprise and long-term proposal planning. The team will also assist in developing research partnerships across the UNT colleges and departments, with the UNT Health Science Center, and with other institutions in the DFW metro area and the nation. We are currently in the process of hiring a Director, an Associate Director, and an Assistant Director (see the search announcement at <http://ored.unt.edu/news/NewsandSearches.html>).

- **Office of Research Services:** Many changes as detailed below have been made to improve proposal submission, award administration and grant reporting processes, making them more efficient and user-friendly.
- **Technology Transfer and Economic Development:** Several months ago, President Bataille created a Research Park Committee consisting of UNT administrators, Deans, and faculty to advance UNT's agenda of creating a research park. We are committed to making the concept of UNT research park a reality. Recently, we had a workshop with consultants from the Association of University Research Parks (AURP) to discuss the growth and development of UNT Discovery Park (the new name of our research park). A nationwide search is currently in process for a Director who will also be responsible for technology transfer and commercialization.
- **UNT Research Council:** In consultation with the Faculty Research Committee, a research council is being created to advise me on broad issues relating to research, scholarship, and creative activities with the specific goals of raising the volume of UNT's research activity and addressing the discipline-specific research issues as UNT transitions to an emerged research university. The Council, called the UNT Research Council, appointed in consultation with the Deans will consist of twelve UNT researchers selected for their areas of expertise. Associate Vice Presidents for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School will serve as ex-officio members. The UNT Research Council will be chaired by the AVP responsible for research in STEM areas. At least one member of the Faculty Research Committee will also serve on this council.

Faculty Recognition, Proposal Routing and Reporting

- **Faculty Recognition:** Many changes have been made to improve research services, including changes in the Proposal Routing form, so that the PI and all Co-PIs as well as their departments and schools/colleges get due recognition of their research efforts.
- **Proposal Routing:** The new routing form that goes into effect on June 1, 2008 may be found at <http://ored.unt.edu/docs/Routingv5.pdf>. This form includes a table that will allow all participants in a research proposal to identify their individual, departmental and college/school's level of involvement, both as recognition distribution and percentage of IDC returns. The form requires signatures from the PI, the Co-PIs, Chairs and Deans, among others.
- **Matching Commitment:** Research proposal submission now requires a matching commitment form (available for PIs at <http://ored.unt.edu/docs/PI-RMC.pdf> and Co-PIs at <http://ored.unt.edu/docs/COPI-RMC.pdf>) that must be signed and attached to the proposal routing form.
- **Proposal Deadlines:** To enable efficient proposal submission and to allow sufficient time for revisions, a set of deadlines will be implemented effective June 1, 2008. For example, the final proposal with all required signatures will be due in the Office of Research Services a minimum of five days in advance of the sponsor deadline. It is expected that all PIs and Co-PIs will adhere to the deadlines in processing their proposals. View the deadlines at http://ored.unt.edu/docs/Proposal_Timeline.pdf.

- **Awards Reporting:** The new format for reporting of awards provides due recognition to the efforts of all PI and Co-PIs as well as their departments and schools/colleges. Please see <http://ored.unt.edu/reports/index.html>.
- **Service Contracts:** We have devised a uniform process for all UNT academic departments, centers and institutes, and faculty members to provide clinical or non-clinical services to external entities. Service agreements can support individual faculty, centers, and departments by accurately charging for all services provided, allowing uninterrupted operations and expansions, and minimal paperwork. A fee of only 15% (much lower than the full IDC rate) is charged for processing service agreements in compliance with UNT and federal guidelines. Also, it is now possible to develop a Master Agreement (for up to three years) for service projects involving UNT and a single external agency, rather than single agreements for each project.

Indirect Cost Distribution

- **IDC Return for Centralized Administrative Expenses:** The portion of IDC return to the Vice President for Finance and Administration is now frozen at the current dollar level. In FY'09, the return will be approximately 14.2%. These funds primarily support IT services for UNT's research enterprise and Risk Management for research compliance. As IDC recovery at the institution level increases in the future, this percentage may further decrease. President Bataille, Provost Wilkins and Vice President Harris support our effort to reinvest the IDC return as much as possible in research through the VPR office.
- **IDC Return to Schools and Colleges:** The return of IDC from the VPR's Office to the schools/colleges, 32.5%, will remain unchanged. However, effective June 1, 2008, the IDC return directly to the PIs and Co-PIs will be 10%. The allocation of the remaining IDC funds (22.5%) will be left to the discretion of the deans. These changes are designed to give the Deans greater flexibility in using IDC funds to meet faculty research needs, especially for matching commitments and larger/unexpected needs. There will be no return of IDC on service contracts.

Workshops, Training, and Consulting

- **Seminars and workshops:** Our office has begun organizing a variety of seminars and workshops to aid faculty in various aspects of seeking external funding. These will be offered on a recurring basis. Among the first of these was a series of workshops for faculty interested in submitting NSF CAREER Award proposals this Spring.
- **Consultants:** We are also working on arranging for outside consultants to help team proposals as well as highly competitive individual award/grant proposals. For example, a consultant has been hired to review NSF CAREER proposals and to make detailed suggestions for improvement prior to final submission.
- **Compliance Training:** The Office of Research Services will be offering more workshops and training sessions on research compliance. These sessions will include detailed information concerning how research must be conducted according to university standards, and federal and state policies.

New and Expanded Programs for Research Support

- **Junior Faculty Summer Fellowships:** Congratulations to all Junior Faculty who received fellowships for this summer. This year we were able to increase the Provost's allocation for this program from \$200,000 to \$265,000.

- **Small Research Grants:** We have increased our contribution to Small Research Grants from \$750 to \$1000 maximum. This program does still require matching from the applicant's Dean and Chair. The application is located at: <http://ored.unt.edu/vp/forms.html>.
- **Pursuit of Extramural Support Travel Fund:** This program will fund up to half of the cost of travel to funding agencies for those seeking extramural support and will also support local expenses for visits by program managers or other funding agency personnel to UNT. The application is located at: <http://ored.unt.edu/vp/forms.html>.
- **UNT/UNT-HSC Seed Collaborative Program:** A joint competition with UNTHSC was initiated this year. The purpose of the grants was to foster collaborative research between UNT and UNTHSC faculty, encourage work on innovative ideas/concepts, and to enhance opportunities for external research funding, particularly from Federal Agencies. Seven proposals, out of 13, were funded for a total of \$161,500.
- **Undergraduate Research Support:** In order to find ways to encourage and enhance undergraduate research at UNT, we are working closely with the Provost who has agreed to provide funds, \$50,000 in FY'09, to support this program. Dr. Ruthanne Thomas, Associate Vice President of Research, is working on identifying critical issues relating to undergraduate research and to recommend how best to use these funds.
- **Expansion of Computing Services for Research:** In collaboration with the VPR Office, the Computing and Information Technology Center (CITC) is working on expanding the research computing facilities at UNT as well as increasing its support staff for Central High-Performance systems and cyber-infrastructure projects.
- **Initiative to Improve Research Infrastructure:** There will soon be an announcement soliciting proposals for a new initiative that will offer up to \$1 million from the VPR's office to improve research infrastructure. Combined with the Deans' and Chairs' individual contributions (30-50%), this initiative could amount to \$1.7 million dollars for infrastructure improvements. This initiative will fund projects that need \$25,000 to \$200,000 to significantly improve the infrastructure and enhance research productivity.
- **Research Clusters:** The Provost, working with the VPR Office, is funding new faculty hires through a competitive Research Cluster program, which will aid greatly in research collaboration and will position UNT to become a premier research institution by attracting highly qualified and motivated scholars. We received 37 proposals representing almost every college and school on campus. The emergence of the cluster proposal ideas directly from the faculty and the subsequent excitement it has generated on campus is in itself a success story. While most other universities begin with top-down administrative decisions on the cluster areas, UNT is unique in its current bottom-up approach to cluster hiring. Out of the 37 proposals submitted, 13 have been chosen for the second round and are currently under review for final recommendations to the Provost.

My office, in conjunction with other UNT administrative offices, Deans and Chairs looks forward to creating programs and opportunities that enhances UNT's research profile. My staff and I are always open to new suggestions and ideas in regards to improving the programs and procedures that can aid the faculty in their research goals, and the university in its research mission.

We invite you to attend an Open Forum on Thursday, June 12, 2008 at 3pm in Room 355 of the College of Business Administration Building to discuss the above changes and initiatives as well as any other ideas you might have.