

Faculty Senate Resolution Offering Faculty-Originated Suggestions to Improve Research and Grant Productivity at the University of Mississippi

WHEREAS, faculty research is a fundamental part of higher education, ensuring that individual faculty members are on the cutting edge of their chosen fields while also providing an important framework for training students in critical thinking, and the greatest impediments to research productivity for faculty have been time and money, the Faculty Senate Committee on Research and Creative Achievement (with input from the Faculty Senate, as well as the faculty at large), have compiled a list of suggestions that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs may consider in order to support increased research productivity amongst University of Mississippi faculty;

- The faculty recognize that although it is difficult for the ORSP to have an in-depth knowledge of all the ongoing research projects at the University, an office with a more global understanding of University research may be able to provide connections between different researchers or programs and suggest collaborations, and therefore recommend that the ORSP increase activities to have a more global understanding of University research in order to foster and suggest University-wide collaborations.
- As federal funding is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain and researchers are forced to seek out smaller or more non-traditional funding sources, the faculty suggest that ORSP increase activities and develop resources to help faculty find alternative funding sources.
- As professional travel is an integral part of the research process, and many faculty members find the application process for the ORSP travel stipend to be cumbersome and the amount of the award hardly substantial, the faculty recommend ORSP streamline the application process and offer a modest increase in the stipends awarded.
- All research within the University is important, and while Arts and Humanities grants may not necessarily provide the same level of financial benefit as Science grants, Arts and Humanities research and creative works provide several boons to the University (including increasing interest in University enrollment, productivity that impacts various aspects of society, and directly impacting Carnegie classification by training PhD students often at a comparatively lower cost than in other disciplines), the faculty recommend that ORSP develop mechanisms to recognize and promote research and creative works from Arts and Humanities disciplines.
- Because small internal grants can often be used to support the preliminary research necessary to develop larger successful grant proposals, or even support entire research projects, the faculty recommend that the ORSP strengthen and increase the visibility for the Investment Grants Program.
- Although it is clearly not feasible for ORSP to offer one-on-one grant mentorship activities as research in the University is so diverse, the faculty suggest ORSP work to increase grant mentorship activities, such as developing a grant mentorship reward program to induce individual departments to improve grant mentorship, which may include considering such mentorship as a reportable service activity.

- As many departments have disciplines that share major deadlines where multiple faculty are trying to submit grants at the same time, and ORSP review and approval is a necessary step in the grant submission process, the faculty recommend greater communication between ORSP staff and grant writers so that a critical ORSP staff member taking time off work does not create chaos around deadlines.
- The faculty recommend ORSP work with departments to allow professors to redistribute their course load in order to provide more time for research and grant writing.
- As specific corporate sponsorships/branding and alumni donations provide a substantial amount of funds to athletics, the faculty recommend ORSP facilitate communication between interested parties and these entities to potentially provide funding for research, infrastructure, and/or equipment.
- As grants or other large projects can require expertise from a variety sources, often in areas that are not the specialization of the project leader, the faculty recommend ORSP investigate the use of University sources of knowledge (e.g. Business or Law departments) to bolster the potential success of submitted grants that may require specialized expertise.
- While it is clearly beyond the purview of ORSP alone, the faculty recommend investigating the introduction of a small University holiday in October (a Fall Break), as some grant deadlines and/or conferences occur around that time of year and the time off would foster such pursuits.

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Senate of the Faculty of the University of Mississippi offer these points as friendly suggestions to the staff of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs as well as the University Administration in order to bolster the shared goal of research and creative achievement at the University of Mississippi.

RESOLVED, this the 9th day of May 2017.

THE SENATE OF THE FACULTY



Brice Noonan

Chair of the Faculty Senate of the University of Mississippi