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RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020





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The Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Economic Development is responsible for facilitating the research enterprise by working with a broad range of units across the University of Arkansas. In the fall of 2013, the office embarked on a strategic planning process, and the result is Research and Economic Development Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which recognizes its mission, vision and core values. The plan is comprised of six broad objectives that reaffirm the university’s commitment to becoming one of the top 50 public research universities in the United States.

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Mission

The mission of the Office of Research and Economic Development is to support faculty conducting externally funded research; to involve students in the research enterprise; and to spur economic development in the State of Arkansas through the commercialization of university research.

Vision

The vision of the Office of Research and Economic Development is to advance the University of Arkansas toward its goal of becoming one of the nation's top 50 public research universities by 2021.

Core Values

The Office of Research and Economic Development has the following core values:

- To provide excellence in customer service to faculty, staff, students and external constituents
- To provide research development and research administration services that help faculty grow their research program
- To provide a research compliance atmosphere that helps researchers stay within regulatory constraints
- To encourage researchers to involve graduate and undergraduate students on research projects
- To promote an entrepreneurial spirit among faculty and students that will help them commercialize their innovations
- To promote economic development in the region, state and nation
- To promote international collaboration by encouraging researchers to work with partners from different cultural backgrounds and national environments



Objective 1: Strengthen the University Research Culture

1.1 Increase national and international reputation as a research community

- Highlight faculty and student research, scholarship and creative activity in prominent journals and media outlets
- Increase the amount of externally funded research
- Increase international research activity
- Increase the number of research-active faculty
- Recognize significant research and scholarly achievements
- Recruit and hire high-quality post-doctorate employees

1.2 Develop transparent expectations of research productivity and creative endeavors

- Define and publish expectations of external funding and/or scholarly and creative activity by discipline
- Develop an internal communications plan, including real-time feedback, to keep faculty and administration informed

1.3 Institute faculty development programs

- Institute a seed funding program to promote exploration of new research thrusts
- Increase retention of research-productive faculty
- Incentivize team research between senior faculty and junior faculty
- Develop skills re-training programs to encourage faculty with lapsed research to reignite their research program
- Encourage faculty to participate on agency review panels

1.4 Increase the number of nationally and internationally recognized research programs

- Develop and publish research strengths and emerging strengths by college
- Increase the number of tenure and tenure-track faculty lines allocated by research opportunities
- Incentivize targeted hires to support interdisciplinary research clusters
- Increase faculty holding ARA Scholar and ARA Fellow titles
- Market research programs nationally and internationally

METRICS

- Cluster hires
- Colleges with a strategic research plan
- Faculty mentorships
- Interdisciplinary hires
- Post-doctorate employees
- Research-active faculty
- Research expenditures



Objective 2: Create Nationally and Internationally-Recognized Research Clusters

2.1 Increase the number of innovative, scholarly products from research clusters

- Incentivize faculty collaboration through research clusters
- Conduct teaming events to facilitate faculty collaboration
- Encourage research clusters to pursue large global priorities as well as more focused efforts

2.2 Foster an increase in both the number of faculty participating in current interdisciplinary research clusters and the number of new research clusters

- Create additional tenure-track and clinical faculty lines that align with cluster(s)
- Allow colleges and/or programs to compete for interdisciplinary faculty lines
- Reward faculty participation in cluster areas at the departmental and college level
- Encourage consideration of research cluster activity in departmental evaluation/ tenure/ promotion decisions

2.3 Identify research clusters that align with state, regional, national and global priorities

- Host a series of innovation fairs to facilitate industry interaction with researchers
- Partner with Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations to grow industrial relationships
- Realign research foci with national and international funding priorities with workshops and incentives
- Recognize and reward research in priority areas of corporate funding

METRICS

- Faculty in research clusters
- Interdisciplinary faculty lines added per year
- Interdisciplinary proposals
- Research cluster awards
- Research cluster scholarly products



Objective 3: Develop a State-of-the-Art Research Infrastructure

3.1 Provide well-equipped and well-maintained research facilities

- Develop a core facility policy that ensures well-operated facilities for campus and external users
- Develop a campuswide strategy to fully support the research computing needs of faculty, students and staff
- Establish a classified research facility

3.2 Support faculty in all phases of research administration

- Create an Office of Research Development to better support faculty with assistance and training in grant and contract identification, development and implementation
- Better coordination of pre- and post-award units with other campus units that provide proposal preparation and grant-management support
- More transparent grant and contract accounting and management tools that meet the operational and planning needs of stakeholders
- Provide an institutional repository for preservation and dissemination of research data and publications
- Reduce administrative burdens by providing more research compliance assistance and training

3.3 Increase library resources for research

- Enhance library resources appropriate for a “research intensive” university
- Upgrade University Libraries to qualify for Association of Research Libraries membership

3.4 Ensure adequate research space to address society's grand challenges

- Develop a process for integrating the planning and development of research space, from strategic priorities and tactical needs to completed buildings and renovated space
- Create space-use policies at both university and college levels

METRICS

- Library funding compared to peers
- Research space



Objective 4: Enable a Student Research Community

4.1 Increase our national reputation as an undergraduate research institution

- Establish an Office of Undergraduate Research to expand undergraduate research opportunities beyond the Honors College
- Implement large-scale student research projects relevant to campus needs
- Incentivize faculty to engage undergraduates in research
- Get external support for undergraduate research
- Encourage students to apply for nationally competitive awards
- Create and use a zero-credit hour class for undergraduates to document their research on their transcript

4.2 Increase graduate student enrollment to a level appropriate for a national research university

- Increase the graduate student enrollment to at least 20 percent of the student body
- Increase the number of full-paying and sponsored international graduate students
- Increase graduate student stipends to attract high-quality students
- Increase the number of grant-funded graduate students
- Increase endowments to add additional graduate student assistantships
- Encourage faculty to host Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) programs to strengthen graduate student recruitment

4.3 Increase the number of graduate students who are nationally recognized for scholarship, creativity and innovation

- Encourage graduate students to apply for nationally competitive awards
- Enhance and maintain graduate student recognition and reward programs for research

4.4 Increase the diversity of the undergraduate and graduate student researcher community

- Apply and be awarded a Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
- Increase the number of graduate students from underrepresented minorities

METRICS

- External support for graduate students
- Graduate stipends relative to regional/national trends
- Graduate student ratio to total student enrollment
- Internal support for graduate research
- Nationally competitive awards
- Publications and presentations at peer-reviewed conferences
- Recruitment from REU programs
- Undergraduates who publish and present at peer-reviewed conferences
- Undergraduates working on research projects
- Underrepresented students involved in research



Objective 5: Grow The Economy Through Research Commercialization

5.1 Grow the Arkansas economy through university research, industry engagement, and innovation.

- Identify mentors and provide incentives for research commercialization “champions”
- Implement “entrepreneur-in-residence” programs
- Implement a student-guided angel fund to grow and retain angel and venture capital knowledge in the state

5.2 Increase partnerships between university and industry to foster research and improve participating company’s competitive advantage

- Implement the IGNITE model for graduate student research on industry issues
- Get federal funding for commercialization programs like NSF Innovation CORPS
- Partner with Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations to grow industrial research relationships
- Publish a web portal of all available facilities and services across the campus
- Establish a research foundation to better support industry research funding

5.3 Increase faculty support for generation of new technology-based ventures

- Reinforce the inclusion of faculty commercialization activities in promotion and tenure criteria
- Include entrepreneurship/ commercialization training in new faculty orientation and with current faculty
- Incentivize faculty commercialization sabbaticals
- Implement an intellectual property validation fund to allow faculty to develop their innovations

5.4 Enhance national and international reputation for entrepreneurship and commercialization

- Communicate importance of U of A economic development to the State of Arkansas
- Increase the number of National Academy of Inventors (NAI) members/fellows.
- Increase the number of National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA) members/fellows
- Recognize faculty, staff and student inventors and entrepreneurs

METRICS

- Engaged mentors
- Entrepreneurship courses
- Entrepreneurs in residence
- Industry agreements
- In-state employment of U of A graduates
- Intellectual property licenses and trend
- Intellectual property validation fund investments
- National Academy of Inventors members/fellows
- Patent applications and awards
- Student-led start-ups
- Student-run angel fund investments and placements
- Technology intellectual property-based start-ups



Objective 6:

Raise Public Awareness of Research and Economic Development Successes

6.1 Increase recognition of the university as a top research university

- Convey research “points of pride” to multiple audiences, including influencers on the local, state, national and international level
- Identify and cultivate “ambassadors” across campus to instill institutional engagement and belief in achieving the goal
- Pitch outstanding research in targeted media outlets, such as trade publications
- Create an annual research communications report
- Establish and promote a faculty media training series

6.2 Promote the university’s role as an economic engine for the state, nation and world

- Seek out and market testimonials from faculty, students and alumni, as well as industry professionals who hire our graduates – linking their research to work-ready skills – and who work with our faculty and staff
- Pitch outstanding entrepreneurial success stories in targeted media outlets, such as trade publications

6.3 Communicate research expertise and capabilities to internal and external constituents

- Identify areas of research excellence and highlight faculty, staff and students in those areas.
- Pitch outstanding research success stories in targeted media outlets, such as trade publications
- Share news about the recruitment, retention, and integration of outstanding faculty who bolster the U of A research enterprise
- Promote the societal impacts of university research
- Engender a culture of “ambassadors” to share their research expertise and equip with tools to highlight their U of A affiliation
- Seek opportunities to host colleagues and professional meetings on campus to better showcase our research strengths and expertise

METRICS

- National media appearances – economic development
- National media appearances – research
- Targeted communications to influencers

