MOVING THE RESEARCH AGENDA FORWARD: DEVELOPING YOUR FACULTY

Vimal Chaitanya, New Mexico State University
G. Dale Wesson, University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Alicia Knoedler, University of Oklahoma
Overview and Format

• Interactive with discussion
• Briefly present 6 topics
• 5-7 minutes perspective and experience
• Preliminary discussion and questions
• Overall discussion for remaining 15 minutes of session
Topics

• Our context – Our pathways
• Developing a Strategic Research Plan for the Institution
• Gaining credibility in the eyes of faculty
• Understanding faculty strengths and needs
• Supportive Research Environment for Professional Development
• Enhancing research through effective partnerships
• Balancing significant demands
Our context – Our pathways

Vimal Chaitanya - Vice President for Research, New Mexico State University

G. Dale Wesson – Vice President for Research and Economic Development, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Alicia Knoedler – Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Center for Research Program Development and Enrichment, University of Oklahoma
Most Important VPR/VCR Skills

- Leadership
- Ability to Influence Stakeholders (E.G.,…)
- Ability to Gain Credibility in Eyes of Faculty
- Strategic Planning
- Critical Thinking
DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN FOR THE INSTITUTION

Vimal
A Critical Planning and Investment Tool

- A 3-5 year plan that is revised as the research environment (internal and external) changes
- Involves stakeholders at all levels of the institution—central and college administration, faculty, staff, and students
- Delineates the framework for fostering research, research education and training, and economic development
- Provides a roadmap to achieve goals and objectives
- Helps with making decisions on allocating resources
- Defines performance measures that help identify what strategies are working to improve performance
SWOT Analysis

- Systematic analysis of research activity and key internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats)

- Helps determine
  - Research productivity, including core and emerging areas of strength
  - Areas for improvement such as needed infrastructure, partnership with industry, streamlining of processes, or faculty incentives
  - Identification of strategic opportunities, including interdisciplinary and multi-institutional efforts
  - Challenges and issues as a result of funding trends and competition
GAINING CREDIBILITY IN THE EYES OF FACULTY

Dale
Gaining credibility in the eyes of faculty

- Review Major Research Areas within each College
  - Meet with Deans
  - Meet with individual research faculty
  - Listen
    - Existing challenges
    - Opportunities for collaboration (internal and external)

- University Research Committee
  - Listen
Gaining credibility in the eyes of faculty

- Determine Reward Structure
  - Return of IDC
  - Acknowledgment of successful researchers
    - University Publications
    - Annual Report
- Proposal Development
  - Consider Liberal Arts Faculty
UNDERSTANDING FACULTY STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

Alicia
SUPPORTIVE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vimal
Resources for Faculty Professional Development

Working in coordination and cooperation with the Provost, college deans, and department heads,

- Ensure junior faculty have the mentorship they need to succeed and grow in research
- Provide workshops, grant clubs, and principal investigator training to help them with sponsor and institutional requirements
- Invest in core research facilities and multi-user instrumentation through a planned, institutional effort
- Develop a formal process for course release to faculty awarded large grants or preparing large center proposals
- Provide bridge funding to sustain productive research
- Support and provide resources for prestigious research programs that grow faculty careers
Resources for Faculty Professional Development

• Provide seed funding to jumpstart promising research
• Build and promote interdisciplinary research teams that can engage in complex and challenging programs
• Streamline research administration processes to facilitate conduct of research, including
  • IRB and IACUC
  • Pre-award and Post-award functions
  • Provide project management training and support
Recognition and Reward

- Nominate faculty to professional panels and committees at the national and international level
- Organize research rallies to recognize faculty that have won prestigious grants
- Host millionaire reception and awards
- Institute an incentive fund for motivating faculty to write more proposals
- Provide a percentage of salary savings from course buyout to the PI and Co-PIs as a "bonus"
- Provide permanent salary increments based on research productivity
ENHANCING RESEARCH THROUGH EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Alicia
Why VPRs would accept position if offered it today (N=60) (open-ended)

- Challenge: 20%
- Influence Progress and Growth: 16%
- Rewarding: 15%
- Enjoy the Job/Great job: 14%
- Impact Others at Univ. (faculty, students): 12%
- Intellectually Fulfilling: 11%
Why VPRs would NOT accept position if offered it today (N=14)

- Too Many Responsibilities/Exhausting
- Issues with Leadership
- Funding
- Lack of Influence
- Affect on Family
BALANCING SIGNIFICANT DEMANDS

Dale
Balancing significant demands

• Demands
  • Strategic planning and implementation
    • Meeting w/ Committees, Deans, faculty
  • Office of Sponsored Programs
  • Grant Administration
  • Office of Technology Transfer
  • Funding Agencies
  • Research Foundation Administration
  • Economic Development
    • Local and State Stakeholders
DISCUSSION
Most Common VPR Responsibilities

- Institutional Review Board
- Sponsored programs, pre-award services
- Research development
- Inst. Animal Care & Use (IACUC)
- External Funding
- Research Center/Campus
- Patenting/licensing
Most Important Knowledge

- University Culture
- Developing Strategic Research Areas and/or Teams
- National Research Priorities
- Personnel Management
- How to Develop and/or Sustain Programs
Top Ways to Prepare Future VPRs (open-ended)

- Research Administration Experience
- Other Admin. Experience
- Leadership/Mgmt./Comm. Training
- Experience in Office of VPR
- Management of Large Entities
- General Research Experience
Greatest Current Challenges of Position

- Decling Federal Budgets
- Insufficient Internal Funding
- Insufficient External Funding
- Too Many Activities for One Person
- Faculty Who are Insufficiently Bold and Unwilling to Take Risks
- Burdensome Federal Compliance Regulations