Unpacking the Position of Vice President/Provost/Chancellor for Research

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The Vice President/Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost for Research (hereafter VPR) is:

- A key (though perhaps not well understood) position in public and private research universities.
- Structured and deployed in a wide variety of ways with a wide variety of responsibilities.
- Facing many new challenges owing to problematic budgets, compliance requirements, and dramatic changes in the higher education landscape.
Motivation for the Survey

- No comprehensive survey had been conducted of VPRs/VCRs to understand
  - Administrative structures utilized and their strengths and weaknesses
  - Characteristics and experiences of individuals holding the position
  - Current roles and responsibilities of the position
  - New and emerging challenges, and skills needed to meet them
  - Strategies for effectively preparing the next generation, including possible roles for CRPGE and other APLU organizations
- Article on survey results has been submitted to the peer reviewed Review of Higher Education
Structure of the Survey: 64 Questions About...

- Your Institution (6)
- You (5)
- Your Professional Experience (8)
- The Structure of your Current Position (19)
- Training (5)
- Current State of the VPR/VCR Position (18)
- Succession Planning (3)
- Response rate = 50%
- Many more results and analyses than we have time to show today!!
84% from Research Universities
- 51% Very high research activity (Now Highest Research/R1)
- 33% High research activity

97% from public universities

41% from land grant universities
VPR Gender and Ethnicity

- **Female**: 80%
- **Male**: 19%
- **Prefer not to Disclose**: 1%

- **White**: 91%
- **Black or African American**: 5%
- **Asian**: 3%
- **Prefer not to Disclose**: 1%
Year VPR received PhD

Discipline of Degree
25% Engineering

24% Biomedical and Biomedical Sciences

22% Physical Sciences

5% Social Sciences

5% Psychology

5% Agriculture and related sciences

Mean: 1983
Std. Dev.: 7
N: 79
Reporting Structure in VPR Organization

- President/Chancellor: 70%
- Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost: 25%
- Vice Chancellor for Research: 4%
- Other: 1%
- Graduate Dean: 1%
Mean: 10.2
Median: 8
Std. Dev.: 10.0
N: 78
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
Other VPR Responsibilities

- 34% have purview over Health Campus/Organization
- 24% have purview over Veterinary Medicine Campus/Organization
- 57% have responsibility for a 501(c)3 non-profit research organization
VPR Organization Budget

- 63% have budget linked to indirect cost recovery
VPR Organization Budget (in millions of dollars)
What is your role in deciding whether cost sharing should be provided to a given grant proposal submission?

- Solely Responsible: 50%
- Partly Responsible: 40%
- Not Responsible: 10%
What is your role in providing money for grant proposal cost sharing relative to other offices once the decision to provide it has been made?
VPR Role in Retention Packages

- 57% have role in funding retention packages, relative to other offices
Role of VPR in Funding Startup Packages

- 79% have a role in funding startup packages
I have control over the allotment of space and facilities for research.
I am very involved in budget planning at the university level.
I am very involved in **strategic** planning at the university level.
Goals of Strategic Plan for Research

- Multidisciplinary Research
- External Funding from Federal Agencies
- Research Interactions with Private Sector
- Applied Research Development
- Undergraduate Participation in Research
- Research with Non-Profit Foundations
- Diversity of Fields of Research
- Diversity Among Faculty and/or Students
- Linking Research with Philanthropy
- Other
I received formal or informal PERSONAL MENTORING that allowed me to be a competitive candidate for my current position(s).
What else was instrumental in helping you to get your position? (open-ended)

- Director/Assistant Director
- Department Chair/Head
- Research Experience
- Service in Gov./Federal Organization
- Dean/Assoc. Dean
- Involvement with Sponsored Research
- Leadership Outside of Academia
Most Important Knowledge

- University Culture
- Developing Strategic Research Areas and/or Teams
- National Research Priorities
- Personnel Management
- How to Develop and/or Sustain Programs
Most Important Skills

- Leadership
- Ability to Influence Stakeholders (E.G., President, Fellow Deans, Trusts, Etc.)
- Ability to Gain Credibility in Eyes of Faculty
- Strategic Planning
- Critical Thinking
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
Greatest Current Rewards of Position

- Helping Faculty Achieve Their Goals
- Building Infrastructure for Future Research
- Seeing Society Benefit through the University's Research Efforts
- Seeing Advances Made in the Scholarly Enterprise
- Helping Create Jobs
New challenges/roles taken on recently

- Economic Development
- Commercialization of University Research
- Export Controls
- Foundation Relations
- Philanthropy
- Private Industry Relations
Top Emerging Trends/Challenges for VPRs (open-ended)

- Funding Issues
- Economic Development
- Relationships with Industry
- Compliance Burden
- Research Collaboration
- Faculty Development
Knowledge/Skills Needed for Position in Next 3-5 Years (open-ended)

- External Relations/Communication
- Leadership/Management Skills
- Fostering Teamwork/Collaboration
- Working with Industry/Private Sector
- Strategic Planning
- Internal Relations (within University)
Ways to Make VPR Position More Effective (open-ended)

- More Staffing
- More Funding
- Involvement in Strategic Decisions
- Report to President
- More Institutional Focus on Research
- Changes in F&A distribution
- Increase Internal Support
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
Summary of Findings

- VPR gender and ethnic diversity are notably low
- Few institutions have plans for UG research
- Institutions with strategic plans for research tend to fare better
- VPR duties, workload and future challenges suggest difficulty attracting the next generation of leaders
- VPR succession planning appears to not be a priority within institutions
- Considerable turnover (~50%) may occur in VPR positions during the next 1-3 years.
- Current VPRs appear to view their successors as having career paths similar to their own, perhaps leading to blindness to those in non-traditional pathways
Helping Build the VPR Workforce

- For VPRs:
  - Provide professional development for those who might wish to become VPRs

- For Aspiring VPRS:
  - Speak with your VPR about your ambitions and her/his view of possible professional development activities
  - Point your VPR to this survey and the journal article
  - Seek to become a strategic player at your institution
  - Read materials that are relevant to VPR activities
  - Make yourself known to search firms