

Evaluation Committee Report

Progress of Research Strategic Plan through March 31, 2018

The Evaluation Committee, comprised of the Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) and Center Directors (CDs), met on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 to review progress of the Research Strategic Plan over the period from its inception, third quarter of FY 2017, through the third quarter of FY 2018. The ADRs and CDs were selected for this committee because they represent a broad cross section of the research community and serve in leadership roles to address research interests across main campus. In advance of the meeting, the committee was sent the “Report of Progress – Research Strategic Plan” (attached) for review.

The charge to the committee:

1. Meet annually to review the objectives and tasks for the previous fiscal year. OVPR Staff will provide all Research2020 materials needed to conduct the review.
2. Review all materials in advance of the annual meeting to be prepared to actively participate in discussions regarding achievement of objectives and tasks from the previous fiscal year.
3. Attend all meetings, if possible. If unable to attend in person, participate by phone or web conference.
4. Determine which objectives and tasks for a given year have been met based on the metrics identified in Research2020.
5. Of the objectives and tasks not met for a given year, make recommendations to the VPR as to whether the objectives and tasks will be retained and moved to the following year, modified, or eliminated if the objectives or tasks are no longer relevant given the current environment.
6. Provide thoughtful input on what else needs to be done to grow research at UNM.

The committee reviewed the entire “Report of Progress – Research Strategic Plan.” Feedback from the committee was generally positive regarding the accomplishments of objectives and tasks listed in the Research Strategic Plan. Below is a summary of comments from the committee – sorted by associated working group area.

Research Excellence

Discussion primarily focused on Task RE-2A regarding seed funding for proposals related to the 2017/2018 emerging areas of research excellence as identified through the RSP process.

Specific requests:

- Expand emerging areas to include a separate strand related to indigenous issues.
 - This relates closely to the goal to have a process for identifying current emerging areas. Emerging areas are not static. Although, ultimately, this will be accomplished through analysis of the Faculty Annual Activity Report (FAAR), the OVPR acknowledges the need to have an interim process to identify current emerging areas and proceed with seed funding initiatives for these areas, and is preparing a survey for ADRs/CDs to provide input into this process.
- Use the awards process as an opportunity to coach researchers about how to go for more robust funding. This would be a good mentoring opportunity.
 - This is already occurring within the auspices of OVPR support organizations (e.g. FRDO). The OVPR would like to expand this opportunity by inviting the appropriate

ADRs/CDs to the meetings with the researcher(s) to broaden the support mechanisms for researchers who would benefit from this type of mentorship.

- Provide better definitions of “place-based-research” and include subject matter experts in the evaluation/decision team for the seed awards.
 - While the request for further definition of “place-based-research” is specific to a current emerging area, the OVPR recognizes the need for clarity in proposal requests. Going forward, we will strive to be as clear as possible in defining terms. In addition, to avoid increasing administrative burden for proposal reviews, subject matter experts will be recruited to provide “mail-in” reviews only if needed.

Included in discussion during this section of the review were requests for additional institutional level support for research activities – specifically from the Provost’s and President’s offices. Advocacy at all levels is necessary to grow research at UNM.

In addition, Monica Kowal reviewed the impact of the relationships with the OVPR, ADRs and CDs in community-engaged research activities. She will be hosting a workshop in the fall to catalog the community engaged research being done on campus. In addition, she, Patricia Henning and Mark Childs are representatives on the redesign team and will advocate for support for research activities as opportunities arise.

Human Capital

The discussion of this area centered on three primary topics: Recognition of research faculty, the review processes of the Research Allocation Committee (RAC), and the exploration of salary incentives for research-active faculty.

Specific Requests:

- Find a way to recognize and incentivize research faculty. These individuals are major contributors to the success of the research community but are left out of many discussions about incentives.
 - The OVPR has recently begun an evaluation of resources for postdocs on campus, as well as how many we have and their impact on the research enterprise. Eventually this could develop into something for research-track faculty in general as the beginning of a means to support them so that they can have a parallel faculty group that ideally would have some means to focus on the issues they face (i.e., need for bridge funding).
- Concern was raised about how RAC is conducting the proposal review process. It was suggested that they develop a clear rubric to show how they are evaluating proposals. Comments made regarding submitted proposals are sometimes discouraging to faculty. A subset of ADRs are planning to meet with the Faculty Senate President to raise the issue.
 - The OVPR is in agreement with the suggestion that ADRs bring the concerns to the Faculty Senate and will advocate with them as requested and appropriate.
- There was a lengthy discussion about identifying equitable salary incentives for research-active faculty and even regarding the term “research-active.” Concern was raised about using SOE as a model for a more broad-reaching methodology. It was stated that some faculty members feel that SOE pilot policies imply that those who bring in funding are more valuable than those who are involved with different scholarly or creative works. A broad-reaching request was that we begin work to change the way university leadership thinks about research. The perspective is that leadership doesn’t understand or sufficiently value unsponsored research.
 - The OVPR understands that the best approach would be to have a “palette of incentives” to provide an environment that recognizes and retains researchers of all disciplines.

Infrastructure

A large amount of work was completed in this area over the evaluation period. The Evaluation Committee specifically recognized the changes and improvement initiatives in OSP (Pre-Award). They stated that the changes have been “fantastic.” In addition, there was support for the planned external review of OSP (Pre- and Post-Award) by NCURA.

Specific Requests:

- Members of the committee stressed the importance of “research” being at the table to provide input into the facilities master plan – saying that this is “critically important” to research.
 - The OVPR is in agreement with this and will work closely with the Provost’s Office and PDC to advocate for research interests. The OVPR will request input from the ADRs when planning is underway.

Federal / State Government Relations

The committee expressed thanks to Connie Beimer and the OVPR for including the ADRs/CDs in the planning of UNM’s federal priorities. It was suggested that global partnerships could also be a benefit for the university research enterprise.

Corporate Relations

Specific Request:

- The feedback for this area was limited to a question about whether the outreach to industry would include entities focused on health issues.
 - This initiative is in the very beginning stages and has not yet begun to identify target partnerships. Once the infrastructure has been set up, the OVPR and Corporate Roundtable will query the ADRs/CDs for specific partners to target.