Research Focus Group Report

Kansas State University

Office of Research

and Sponsored Programs

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Background

During January and February, the Office of Research and Sponsored Program's (ORSP) staff conducted a series of focus groups to gain insight on how the Research Office and ORSP can better serve faculty in supporting their scholarly activities, provide relevant insights to the search for a new Vice President for Research (VPR), and inform our efforts to attain the goals of K-State 2025. Eight of the ten convened focus groups represented academic areas (Biological Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural Sciences, the Arts, Humanities/Social Sciences/Architecture, Planning & Design, Physical Sciences, Engineering, and Education). In organizing the focus groups, we wanted to make sure that we included a wide cross section of representation from the academic areas. The members of these groups were identified through participation in the ORSP Faculty Development Awards/University Small Research Grant programs and through recommendations from the Associate Deans for Research. The ninth focus group consisted of the Associate Deans for Research Council (ADRC) whose members provided input from a research administrators view point. It should be noted that the Council also includes representatives from the K-State Libraries, International Programs, the Graduate School, the Corporate Engagement Office, and the Salina and Olathe campuses who also participated in this focus group. We provided the ADRC the results from each of the focus groups ahead of their session to gain their input regarding the raised issues. During the ADRC focus group meeting, the participants requested that we convene an additional focus group for Grant Specialists from within the colleges in order to obtain more of an operational viewpoint. Therefore, the tenth and final group included the Grants Specialists who work for an academic unit, who help their faculty with extramural submissions, and who work closely with the PreAward Services Office.

Each focus group was sent the same set of questions (see appendix) to think about prior to their session. These served only as an initial discussion starting point allowing the groups freedom to bring up issues as the discussion evolved. Notes were taken during each session, written up, and sent to the members for review, additional input or clarification. Focus group members who could not make their sessions because of a conflict were also sent the notes and asked to provide input. Their comments were incorporated into their session's notes.

This current document includes the eight academically oriented session notes, organized alphabetically, followed by the Associate Deans for Research Council and Grants Specialist notes. We have also provided a summary of key issues/points that surfaced as a result of these meetings. To ensure transparency, this report was sent to the Vice President for Research search committee and is available through the ORSP website.

Key Points from the Focus Group Discussions

The 2025 Visionary Plan is the university's strategy to transform Kansas State into a top 50 public research university. Faculty expressed concern that what started out as a clear vision and expression of how we will position ourselves for success in the future has become increasingly unclear as planning efforts and associated strategies have unfolded. The unifying construct of 2025 is understood for the university at large, yet the complexity behind implementation and execution of its components has created an atmosphere or perception that is not aligned with the intent of the visionary plan. The following key points underscore that complexity and are intended to highlight desired support, focus and orientation of the offices supporting research activities.

Core Facilities

- There needs to be a KSU strategic/implementation plan for core facilities and their funding. The leadership for this plan should come from the Research office. Successful funding and staffing models from other universities should be examined as part of developing this plan.

- Key points regarding core facilities:
    - They are needed to promote interdisciplinary research at this university.
    - They cannot be supported solely through user fees; otherwise, they become too expensive for faculty to use.
    - These facilities must be available when researchers need them, including after hours.
    - Core facility faculty/staff need to be well trained and keep up to date on new techniques/technology associated with the core's equipment. They also need to be willing to train faculty.
    - The core facility faculty should be an integral part of the research conducted at the facility as well as part of the proposals submitted to support that research. These faculty members should also write proposals for new instrumentation and for funding to keep the equipment running.
    - Central support is needed to assure the continuity and sustainability of core facilities operations.
    - While KSU has some core facilities, they are scattered, typically run by departments and aren't readily available to faculty from other disciplines.
    - Information needs to be readily available that identifies the types of equipment and services available in the core(s).

Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Research

- Interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research needs to be encouraged and better engrained within the institutional framework. Funding agencies are moving more towards grants that require this approach to research, especially for larger awards that can significantly increase K-State's extramural funding.

- The promotion and tenure system can be a barrier to interdisciplinary research. The new VPR should support changes to this system that encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary research and that have a reward system to support them.

- Other barriers to interdisciplinary research include:

  - A non-standardized approach to splitting sponsored research overhead (SRO) among collaborating departments which does not always reflect/reward a group's/faculty member's level of participation.
  - A reporting system that gives "credit" to a department once an interdisciplinary project is in place only if a separate administrative/accounting center is set up in that department. Thus, if a PI is leading an interdisciplinary project with 6 participating departments, he/she may have to handle the paperwork to help set up 6 administrative centers.

- A program like Targeted Excellence is needed to help groups begin collaborating and to encourage interdisciplinary research. To help avoid some of the issues associated with the previous program, outside reviewers should be used to determine which proposals will receive an award.

- There needs to be a better mechanism for faculty, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, to find out about interdisciplinary proposal initiatives where they can play a role.

- Faculty appreciate the KBED hosted events that promote interaction and meeting faculty from multiple disciplines, but are confused about the purpose of the event and the lack of follow on actions.

Tuition for Graduate Research Assistants

- K-State needs to pay tuition for our graduate research assistants. Because we do not currently pay tuition, our faculty cannot compete for the best graduate students. These students can go to other schools (including other state universities) that pay a higher stipend and have a tuition waiver.
- The Associate Deans for Research Council felt that graduate research assistant tuition was one of the most pressing problems facing K-State research in the near term. We are the only university in the Big 12 which does not have a policy of paying graduate research assistant tuition.

Funding Issues

- The FDA/USRG programs are extremely important and, for some groups, they are a critical funding source supporting scholarly activities. These awards allow faculty to collect preliminary data, make contacts, and obtain international exposure for their work. It would help if these awards were larger, more in the $5,000-$10,000 range. They are a necessity for the Arts because funding is just not available for travel and to buy supplies and materials.

- There needs to be recognition of the funding issues that the Arts currently face. The dissolution of the Kansas Art Commission not only took away this important source of funding, but also lost state funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. This Agency also will not now consider any funding requests from K-State faculty. Art for Art's sake is rarely funded anymore. Faculty must put their creative works within the context of some other larger interest such as sustainability or childhood obesity. While many of the Arts faculty are willing to do this, it would be incredibly helpful if more funding were available to assist with materials/supplies costs without these constraints. Currently, faculty will primarily self-fund these costs. Of particular help would be $5-10,000 grants for mid-tenured faculty who need funding for creative projects/pursuits required for promotion. Arts related departments just do not have the resources to help faculty with these projects.

- While corporations almost universally see the value of the Arts, they are hesitant to fund artists without limitation on subject and content. A creative way around this dilemma would be to set up a general fund for "Scholarship in the Arts" to which corporations and other entities could donate. OSRP would manage the fund in a manner similar to its FDA/USRG programs.

ORSP/PreAward Services Support

- ORSP needs to better communicate the proposal writing support and training it already provides. There is also a need for more advanced grant writing sessions and training at the departmental level on finding funding opportunities. OSRP should also better advertise its webpages that contain information on funding opportunities, grant writing, budgeting, and existing diversity/educational resources that can be included in a grant proposal.

- The Research Office's website should include links to ORSP/PreAward Services website as well as to the other offices that report to it. Contact information should also be included on all these associated websites.

- While the sponsored project help is great for federal proposals and awards, there are issues with private sector proposals and awards. It is hard to know where these documents are in the process and who needs to do what, causing delays and frustrated private sector sponsors. A HACCP type of analysis is needed to figure out where the bottlenecks are and how to streamline the system. A "FedEx like" tracking system would be great so that information on where a document is can be accessed on line and needed actions executed in a timely fashion. Because of the number of these types of awards and the need to separate them from the "due-date-driven" federal award system, it would also be helpful to have a person who is dedicated to and experienced in getting these types of awards through the system.

- More report support and standardization are needed on the post awards side similar to the type of support and standardizations provided on the PreAward Services side.

Data

- Obtaining the data (both awards and expenditures) needed to assess progress towards 2025 is very difficult. These data do exist, but they are hard to get at the times and in the format needed. Often data have to be pulled by hand from several disparate sources for timely ad hoc and routine reporting. Data that is received is often in a format (PDF) that is hard to work with and needs an extensive amount of time and labor to put it in Excel so that the data can be sorted and/or displayed in tables and charts that allow for better presentation and easier analysis. The Data Warehouse currently under development may help, but it is not clear when this will be finished and whether it will be in the form needed by Associate Deans for Research and their colleges.

SRO/IP/Commercialization

- More transparency is needed in how SRO is distributed and spent. The way indirect costs are distributed is a mystery, particularly to groups who have less experience with extramural funding.

- Faculty members like working with KSURF. However, they do not have confidence in K-State's commercialization capabilities. In particular, there is a widespread feeling that we consistently price ourselves out of the market.

- The KSU policy on intellectual property (IP) needs to be assessed to keep pace with our 2025 goals and emerging focus on corporate engagement. Faculty are concerned that the current IP process relative to industry needs to be streamlined so that we are not negotiating these IP issues for every industry contract we receive. We should look at the approach used at other schools like the Universities of Pittsburg, Wisconsin and Michigan who have greatly simplified this process. Such an IP assessment would help us be competitive with other academic institutions. Our IP policy relative to faculty should also be assessed with regard to consistency, approach to implementation, and mechanisms to incentivize faculty.

Miscellaneous

- The new VPR should be more engaged with faculty and encourage team building.

- The 2025 RSCAD metrics should take into account that some departments are primarily teaching units.

- There should be an online, searchable database with information on facilities and equipment as well as on faculty expertise and research/creative interests.

Agriculture Focus Group
January 10, 2014

Members:

Timothy Dalton, Agricultural Economics
Brian McCornack, Entomology
Dave Mengel, Agronomy
Vara Prasad, Agronomy
Barry Bradford, Animal Sciences and Industry
Daniel Devlin, Agronomy, KCARE Director
Harold Trick, Plant Pathology
Anna Whitfield, Plant Pathology
Dirk Maier, Grain Sciences & Industry
Sara Gragg, Animal Sciences & Industry
Sunghum Park, Horticulture, Forestry and Recreational Resources
Michael Tokach, Animal Sciences and Industry

ORSP Attendees:

Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Beverly Page
Caron Berges

Sponsored project support. Adding sponsored project support people in the College of Agriculture has been a tremendous benefit. Fixed price agreement forms have also been very helpful. Not everyone knows about fixed price agreements and new faculty need to be trained on different ways they can get money through the system. These agreements work really well especially when a master agreement is in place with the sponsor.

The key issue is that the sponsored project support system is geared toward federal submissions. While it typically works well for these types of proposals/awards, it does not work well for private sector proposals/awards in Agriculture as is outlined in the sections which follow.

Communication on where grants are in the process is needed. The main struggle is lack of information on where an award is in the process. We don't know where the letters are, what's been sent to the company, whether the money's arrived, and where all these pieces are at in process. We're not sure whether we should follow up or whether someone else is following up. There needs to be a streamlined method for handling company and industry grants and communicating where they are in the process. Because of this lack of communication and feedback, things can get stuck or lost in the system. We have lost awards or tainted our relationship with industry sponsors because of our lack of responsiveness. For example, we had an award from Koch Industries. There was an issue with the format; it needed to be in a format that the university would accept. This was an easy fix, but it took 6 months. It sat at the bottom of someone's pile for 4 months; no one else knew what the problem was or where the paperwork was. If the faculty member had known what the problem was, it would have been fixed much more quickly. The award was not for a lot of money, but it soured our relationship with Koch for a time.

A snag could very well be on the sponsor's side, but the faculty member does not know it because we are completely out of the loop. We need a FedEx type of tracking so that information can be accessed on line. This type of system is needed for both pre and post awards. It would also be good to know the status of active projects and what reports are needed and when they are due. Can CAYUSE be used for that adding on a progress tracking function? At other universities (e.g., Purdue), principal investigators (PI)s receive automatic reminders 90, 60, and 30 days in advance of a grant expiration date. You could combine the CAYUSE tracking with responsibility at the departmental business manager level for making sure an action item is followed up on.

A systems analysis is needed. A HACCP type of analysis is needed on the system to figure out where the bottlenecks are, what their cause is, and fix them. Now, small changes need to go completely back through the system every time rather than going through a shortened route. This is inefficient; the process needs to be streamlined. There is a need for a Vice President for Research who is attuned to systems, processes, and streamlining all the steps we need to go through to make this system work well for the university.

Need a first in, first out policy for industry grants. Industry grants often do not have a due date; so they sit while others with a due date get priority. As a result, you have the situation like was described for the Koch example above; the grant sits while others with a due date have priority. We need a first in, first out policy for the proposals that do not have a deadline. To go along with this, we need a person who is dedicated to industry awards, who is familiar with the idiosyncrasies of these types of awards and contracting. This person would be focused on getting these grants through the system. The number of proposals we are submitting is 2, 3, maybe 10 times what is was 10 years ago, with many of them from industry. There should be enough volume for a person dedicated to grants from industry.

Need a 5 day pre-submission deadline for proposals with deadlines. It would help if there were a 5 working day deadline for PreAward Services submission for those proposals that have a deadline. This creates a buffer and some breathing room for PreAward Services to prepare proposals for submission. PreAward Services routinely allows faculty to submit proposals at the last minute jumping over and past departmental business offices and college proposal services. As long as that is allowed, certain faculty that work in the last minute rush mode will always operate that way and disrupt the entire system. It is a totally unfounded myth that we would lose all kinds of grants if a stricter internal submission deadline was established and enforced. Instead what will actually happen after a brief, and for some, a painful transition period, faculty will know the deadline is serious and will comply with it. For example, at my previous institution they imposed a 3-5 day minimum lead time for submission to the proposal service office. If a faculty member didn't comply then permission had to be granted by the department head and each department head could only make 3 such exemptions per fiscal year. While that may sound a bit harsh, it cleaned up a broken system in no time as department heads wanted to preserve such exemptions for truly exceptional circumstances such as large, complex proposal and proposals that depended on subcontract documents from other institutions.

Ways of streamlining the system. Purdue has a standard memo of agreement for any industry grant under $50,000 that didn't have any restrictions on confidentiality or publication. These can be signed off very quickly at a relatively low level in the system. This straight forward approach really streamlined and simplified their system since it quickly dealt with the smaller, lower value awards that we currently have a lot of. Attention then can be focused on the larger, more complicated awards so they can be moved forward more quickly too. Purdue also has a sliding, reduced overhead rate of 1% for every $1000 up to $50,000 for these smaller awards. This approach was a great way to handle smaller grants especially from smaller companies that didn't have corporate lawyers that worry about intellectual property.

Another way to reduce bottlenecks with industry grants might be to offer an overhead break when there are no IP issues; if there are IP or confidentiality issues then full overhead is charged.

The system needs to take into account the restrictions of the growing season. There have been several multi-institutional grants that were awarded in March, but we did not see the money until November. The money needed to be spent by March, but we couldn't do the research because the growing season is over by November. Is there a way to get money sooner once an award is made so that we can get the research done? It is easy to lose a year. Some departments have no money for Graduate Research

Assistants (GRAs). They are totally grant supported. If we don't have funding they don't get paid and we don't have them to help with our research. This is particularly painful when the money is there, but the paperwork has not caught up with it and the growing season clock is ticking.

This is a post award issue that in my view is not so much a matter of setting up the accounts after all paperwork is signed, submitted and the granting agency sends the funds. Instead, we need to certainly set up accounts more quickly and then issue Notices to Proceed to PIs more routinely which means faculty can start charging expenses on their accounts up to a certain amount until the paperwork clears and the funds arrive. There is little risk to allow spending of funds when we know it will come from a federal or state government contract, or certain entities we get funds from reliably each year such as the commissions and certain companies. With contracts from companies or entities we haven't worked with in the past or don't have as good of a track record paying their bills, then we need to wait till the first check arrives. Here too lies a problem as we have experienced before. We can't let a PI continue to spend funds on an account if the contractor isn't paying their invoice as that can create problems when PIs keep spending out their funds and a company refuses to pay because deliverables and milestones weren't met or they went out of business or had a change in management or whatever. However, I think that is where business offices and post award services need to help our PIs so they are aware if and when a problem occurs, but in the interim can stay focused on doing their research.

Corporate Engagement. Most of our industry projects are one-on-one with our contact at the company we are working with. Most often these contacts are at the lower levels of the company. The relationship is more transactional than strategic. Strategic relationships happen at the higher levels in the company. There have been times when we have been approached to make the relationship bigger and tried to involve higher levels; it just made the relationship worse. Our contacts are fighting for funding just like we are; why would they give up some of their funds to help with some grandiose scheme that we have? It is better for us to work with these companies at the lower levels and demonstrate how KSU can deliver in meeting their needs. This helps set up a good relationship with the company for other things for which the foundation might want to approach the company at a higher level. However, there is always the concern that Corporate Engagement types are going to get in the middle of things we already have in place and mess things up. There needs to be more interfacing with researchers before they present to industry. Cargill is a great example of how this can work well. We have benefited greatly with our engagement with them.

Spending flexibility. Once a project is in place, the amount of flexibility you have depends on the accountant to whom you are assigned. We know there are rules that need to be followed to keep us out of trouble, but somehow these get mixed in with procedures that are there for their own sake. For example, post awards forces you to put things into budget categories even though this way of expending the money does not matter to the corporate sponsor. The system is geared toward Federal agency requirements and everything else has to conform to those requirements even if they are not relevant.

KSU needs to grant tuition waivers for GRAs. Because our university does not have tuition waivers, our GRAs cost more than those at neighboring institutions (in some cases they are twice as expensive). As a result, it impacts our competitiveness in obtaining grants. Some funding agencies do not pay tuition, so we have to increase the cost of the stipends we pay the student. This approach has tax consequences for the student and reduces the amount they have for tuition.

This policy influences our ability to recruit good students. It’s really frustrating when you find high quality students that you know will be served better by going here but they go to the neighboring university just because it’s less expensive for them because of the tuition waiver granted by that institution. At Purdue, tuition was handled at the Provost’s level and the funds that supported it come primarily from overhead. Florida State University was the same way. Some universities now have a tuition waiver for students but they basically bill the PI. This approach discourages faculty from taking on graduate students. Even under our policy, you have to think about a project very carefully before you hire a post-doc or grad student. The dollars actually favor a post-doc when you factor everything in. The result of KSU's approach to tuition waivers is that we’re losing good quality students and we’re losing funding.

There are Issues with SRO and "credit" for interdisciplinary projects that cross departmental/college lines. Because of the pressure on deans and department to bring in overhead, there are groups who will not sign the transmittal sheet unless they are getting some of the SRO when a project includes several departments and colleges. There are similar issues on the expenditure side. Even more troublesome are the situations where KSRE is paying for a position in a college outside of Agriculture and the issue of credit has to be figured out. These issues put up road blocks to interdisciplinary research because they make it difficult to get interdisciplinary proposals off campus and to run them once they are awarded. Faculty are not going to want to be bothered with this which is unfortunate because funding agencies are moving more and more toward interdisciplinary research. The new VPR should look at this situation and implement policies that eliminate these roadblocks to interdisciplinary research.

It is disappointing that some think in these terms. My advice to faculty working in teams has been to allocate credit evenly among the PIs especially if they work as a team for longer periods of time and on multiple projects. Then, they need to be sure each lists the correct “credit” amount in their respective P&T docs. The actual expenditures per faculty will of course reveal the true amount that each faculty member was responsible for during the life of a grant but that too could be managed by splitting grant amounts equally among them and then knowing how to charge expenses back and forth. This makes for extra accounting hassle but overcomes the bean counter mentality in the P&T review process.

More transparency is needed on how SRO is allocated and on how it is spent. If faculty could understand how SRO is allocated and spend, it would be helpful. There are rumors that a lot of SRO goes to the BRI, but is that true? Transparency just isn't there with regard to SRO. Most departments in Agriculture return at least some of the SRO to faculty, but not all departments do this. So, there is no uniformity in the distribution. These returned SRO dollars give faculty some flexibility particularly between grants. There are also concerns about there being an "SRO sweep" because of unspent SRO. Agriculture has to save its SRO sometimes to pay for large ticket items like a $300k combines. So, "unspent" SRO can be deceptive.

In some departments, SRO is split between the departments and the PI. That split brings with it the expectation that PIs take care of their own maintenance and repair of equipment, and other needs they have for their labs and research groups. The departmental SRO is used for major repairs, certain equipment purchases, and when you are lucky enough to refill faculty positions, start up for new faculty.

IP and commercialization polices need to be looked at. The university needs to take a hard look at the amount of money and time it spends trying to negotiate, protect, and go after IP as opposed to the funds generated by it over the last 20 years. The reality is we don’t make very much money on IP, but we spend a lot of money on trying to keep it. One faculty member has patents he receives quarterly royalties from and would give them up in a second if he didn’t have to do the paperwork and contend with the hassles associated with them. Working with Marcia at KSURF is great, but there is an issue regarding commercialization. The KSUIC group tends to overprice things. As a result, industry often isn't interested. It seems like if they would lower the price, there would be more takers and be more profitable. Whoever gets the VPR job needs to look hard at pricing and at our commercialization interactions with industry. He/she also needs to find ways to streamline the IP process because it is part of negotiating every single industry grant and it can hold things up. There should be a simpler way to approach this, perhaps like what is being done at the Universities of Wisconsin and Michigan.

At KSU we have NOT been successful in commercializing technology and generating royalties. The KSURF Board of Directors is awaiting the new VPR before launching into its strategic planning process which is long overdue. We need to come up with a new approach that focuses more on the funding of the research by a company which buys them the right to commercialize a technology with perhaps a limit of a $1 million in revenues over X years before we get a share. That way the focus becomes attracting more private funds supporting research at KSU vs KSU trying to make money off royalties when in reality the likelihood for that is very low to none in most research.

We have to be concerned with international treaties and genetic resources. We need someone who understands these issues so we can be sophisticated about how we approach them and avoid problems we have encountered in the past. Nations around the world are tightening up and protecting themselves. We need to figure out ways to gain access to genetic resources by creating partnerships and agreements that allow for materials transfer so our researchers can continue to do their work. That being said, this starts with awareness by and proper training of faculty, staff and students that one can no longer carry or ship seeds across international borders without the proper paperwork.

The Arts Focus Group
January 7, 2014

Members:

Gary Mortenson, Director, School of Music, Theater & Dance (MTD)
Geraldine Craig, Head, Art Department
Julie Pentz, Dance Program, Music Theatre and Dance
Shreepad Joglekar, Art and Photography, Art Department
Jennifer Vellenga, Theater Program, Music Theatre and Dance
Sherry Haar, Apparel, Textiles & Interior Design
Douglas Dow, Art History, Art Department

ORSP Attendees:

Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Caron Berges
Beverly Page

The Effect of 2025. 2025 is a primer for young faculty – they get the paradigm and its effect on tenure expectations. It's the mid-tenured professors who need more help. They are caught between the old and new paradigm; these faculty sometimes don't have the resources to do the project/research that will help them get tenure.

$5,000-$10,000 can really motivate an artist. They realize if they don't work, they don't eat! Could there be incentive funding for mid-tenured faculty to help them get to that next step in their career that coincides with promotion? Priority would be given to faculty seeking tenure and to faculty after mid-tenure. This approach would strategically put the funding right where it will do the most good for developing faculty careers. This type of program would help our faculty immensely.

Funding for the Arts. "Art for Art's sake" is rarely funded anymore. No one wants to fund art unless there is some type of spin to it. Theater and communications groups don't typically require this "spin", but often they won't give to a university. We do have funding from the Compton Foundation because what we are doing has sustainability/green resources as a focus. Also, there are opportunities for funding through one of the sciences or education if the project is spun correctly. Music is partnering with Engineering, Math, and Physics. Dance has also been forced to re-shift its focus to have an opportunity to get funding. It's unfortunate that we need to steer our 'voices' toward whatever is able to be funded.

The Governor dissolving the Kansas Arts Commission has really hurt funding for the Arts. NEA will not even consider artists in the state for funding because there needs to be a state funded institution dedicated to the Arts. We are the only state in the country that does not have one. We applaud Linda Weiss for her efforts, but they did not meet what NEA needed. So, this is a funding avenue that is totally gone for the artists at KSU. Doing away with the Arts Commission does not make sense because studies have shown that the Arts can help with economic development and tourism.

The loss of the Kansas Arts Commission meant the loss of the KS Arts Roster which was a travelling play company of University artists that went out to Western Kansas and brought high-level culture to this area. A lot of these folks were young artists that were trying to develop their craft so that they could eventually perform at larger venues. They have lost that outlet. Economic development has been hurt because these cultural outlets have been diminished in these rural areas of Kansas. The rest of the world knows this connection between Arts and economic development. NEA is funding "Our Town", based on proposals to develop cultural institutions to help a town grow.

NEH has preservation funds, but these do not cover standard research work like publications or exhibition costs (shipping, materials, show entry). Most professors are spending at least 10% of their salaries on funding these types of costs. “Summer salaries” often mean self-funding of projects that artists want to do. Even if we have a grant, we do a lot of self-funding to make the money go further.

Graduate students. There just isn’t money to fund graduate students. The Grammy Foundation is helpful. Often faculty will forgo funding for themselves to have more money for their students.
The Arts programs at K-State don’t have doctoral programs. President Schulz uses the term doctoral programs when he’s talking about graduate programs. This may be a fine distinction but an important one. It makes us feel like we’re one rung down because we don’t have doctoral programs. The Art Department has a terminal degree program, the MFA. It would be better if the 2025 language reflected/ acknowledged terminal degree programs, not just PhD programs.

We are primarily teaching units. Through my work with STEM oriented departments, I realized that there are other faculty who are doing research all year and writing, who only teach one class. These faculty are tenure track like we are. Our load is 4 classes per semester. It is hard to fit research in and work with other groups on campus. The Arts face this challenge continuously because the departments associated with the Arts are teaching units rather than research units. One faculty member is part of a childhood obesity project that is connected to tap dancing. It is hard to find time to work on it, although it is very interesting. The dance program has 3-1/2 faculty members but with the same kind of load as a program that has 12 or 35 faculty members. The result is research activities are not always pursued.

When you’re delivering 3 and 4 classes each semester, filling out grant applications does not seem like really good use of your time. You can build your resume with FDA and USRG awards and see where it goes. Also, you can ride out 2025 and see where it goes because 2025 thinking is still morphing. We’re still basically on the front end of it with another decade to go. Traditionally, we were never even allowed to think about research in that way; we were told we were teaching departments. The thing that’s daunting to some people is adding this research component to what were traditionally teaching departments. Culturally speaking, that hasn’t played well with people who have been here 2 decades.

Juggling scholarship opportunities and "delivering the program". It’s a fine line for department heads between encouraging people on research initiatives/ projects versus delivering the program. In delivering it in music, the load is heavier. Four classes per semester means 18 contact hours per week with students. If you’re in Kansas City or New York City, hiring an adjunct is no problem if your faculty are pulled away because of a special project they have an opportunity to pursue. In Manhattan, KS, it is a totally different situation; adjuncts are hard to find on short notice. Often in Arts, the timeline of a project is crucial – when you get offered to do something special isn’t always on the same timeline as other projects or internal grants where the research is local. For instance, a professor gets asked to go somewhere to work with a playwright but it’s in the middle of the school year and there aren't any other faculty to take the teaching load. However, there is a great collaborative atmosphere here at K-State in the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance – one of the best I’ve ever observed. You learn that you have to be self-less rather than selfish.

The Arts enhance Education. As an example, the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance has about 550 majors and minors but we see about 5000 students per week who come through our doors. There’s not a single college or department that we don’t enhance so what I’m constantly trumpeting is the fact that we don’t create engineers, we create BETTER engineers and we don’t create architecture majors, we just make them BETTER architects!

Innovation Center sponsored KBED focus groups. These functions are really interesting and helpful to get to know others on campus. We are glad to be invited to them. Everyone gets together and there is a lot of energy, but it seems to stop there. There needs to be some type of follow on to sustain the momentum.

Funding opportunity support. If there was a list of grants available to individual artists (not through non-profit or particular content) that would be amazing. Lots of faculty are funded through on-residencies –but those aren't grants to fund research. Those are for time and space and maybe money to travel but that's all – not for supplies and materials. We need to be aware of what other sources are out there to help with this part of our scholarship. The funding database, Pivot, can perhaps help with this as it can be specified to individuals, not just institutions. It used to be that NEA had funding with no strings attached that could be used for supplies and materials. Kansas Arts Commission also had $5k, $1k, and $500 grants could be used just for this, but the Commission doesn't exist anymore. As we have said before this situation has resulted in NEA grants not being an option for Kansas faculty.

FDA and USRG are our life blood! These awards have helped Arts faculty greatly in buying supplies and materials, allowing travel, and other activities. They have also helped ameliorate some of the self-funding our faculty has to do. It would help if there were more funding available! That's not going to change but an enhancement of these programs would provide another strategic tool to help with scholarship in the Arts.

Are the Arts represented well on the FDA/USRG panel? If not, I volunteer to be a reviewer, because I want to make a difference –that's what artists do! Within FDA and USRG, is it known what percentage of the awards fund art proposals? From speaking to other colleagues, it seems it would be a good idea to determine what the percentage is. If we are well represented in the awards, it would be great to know.

Funding by corporations: Almost universally, corporations see the value in the Arts; a lot of their key leaders have an Arts background. The most successful doctors have a background in theatre or some sort of Arts. However, the issue is finding corporate entities who want to help artists without limitations on subject and content. Subject and content are such touchy matters for corporations because if their name is attached to the resulting art and the content is something they don't feel comfortable being associated with, it would be a problem. On the other hand artists want freedom to create as they see appropriate without restrictions.

One way around this dilemma might be to set up a general fund for "Scholarship in the Arts" that would be managed by ORSP. Faculty in the Arts across campus could apply to this program via proposals much like they would for a USRG or FDA. Proposals for award would be chosen by a review panel also as is done for the USRG/FDA program. Organized this way, corporations and other entities could give to this fund, but they would not be directly linked to something they might find distasteful. Artists could maintain their artistic freedom.

These additional funds would make a big difference. The dance program as well as the other Arts programs may be very, very poor but we do fabulous things with what we have. We persevere. We don't have time to think about things despite all of these obstacles. Just think of what we could do if we had a little more funding!!

<u>**Biology Focus Group**</u>
January 6, 2014

<u>**Members**</u>**:**
Rob Denell, Biology, Cancer Research Center
Rollie Clem, Biology
Mike Kanost, Biochemistry
Kim Kirkpatrick, Psychology
Tom Barstow, Kinesiology
Ruth Welti, Biology
Brett Sandercock, Biology
John Blair, Biology
Sue Brown, Biology
Anna Zolkiewska, Biochemistry
Tona Melgarejo, Human Nutrition

<u>**ORSP Attendees:**</u>
Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Caron Berges
Beverly Page

A key area that the Research office can help with is the development of common core facilities. Such facilities will help integrate research programs in the same area as well as across disciplines. They will also help with resource utilization since the equipment can be used for multiple projects/labs rather than each researcher needing to have their own equipment. However, the facilities must be available when researchers need them and after hours. SOPs need to be developed for these facilities and there needs to be a way to easily book time at them. There also needs to be a listing of equipment that is readily available to researchers. Areas needing cores include bioinformatics, sequencing, and microscopy.

COBREs and Targeted Excellence (TE) grants were awarded as seed money to develop infrastructure (COBRE) and encourage interdisciplinary research (Targeted Excellence). Groups were supposed to be sustainable, i.e., take the money and then move the project into a self-sustaining grant. Unfortunately, that just doesn't happen with some core facilities. There is a fine line between an extensible research thrust and a needed core facility that's going to require central administration to help (equipment technology-oriented vs research related). Most COBREs and TEs have brought in more grants and better faculty but they get to a point where they can't be supported until a whole new idea is developed that requires these facilities. As things are currently structured, with research faculty leading the core facilities, such projects seem to be spreading faculty thinner instead of building strengths. User fees alone typically cannot support these shared facilities. They become too expensive.

Core facilities need well trained people to take care of and run them. User fees do not bring in enough money to pay for these needed core people. These people need to keep up on the most current techniques and research associated with this equipment and need to be able to train others in their use. The VPR needs to figure out the best way to organize core facilities and fund them. At KU, the core facility staff/faculty are supported centrally. In some cases, they don't seem to have a vested interest in staying on top of what is needed for the equipment and for the user community, at least the way it is structured there. With the department centric model, there are issues as well. We may want to look at other universities that have well run, vibrant core facilities for ways to structure them.

We also should look at ways to link in with other universities because some core equipment, while used by many people at KSU, is not always available at other universities. While other core facilities (e.g., lipidomics), represent a key research/service area niche for KSU.

Bottom line—we need a KSU strategic/implementation plan for core facilities and their funding.

Another way to encourage cross discipline research collaboration would be to have an easy way to combine graduate programs to facilitate research and interdepartmental interactions. The idea behind this would be to have a "Division of Biological Sciences" that encompasses graduate programs from biology to plant sciences to the vet school to make it easier to train our students across disciplines. This approach would keep us from being so divided and make us stronger because there are more funding opportunities that span disciplines and it would be more attractive to high caliber students. However, for something like this to ever happen, it must be championed by the upper administration.

Training is another area needing support from the Research Office. Training grants are important for graduate and undergraduate research. KSU has a very few of them for a university of this size. The Research Office needs to look at other successful universities (e.g., Wisconsin, UC Davis) and how they support faculty to get and maintain these types of grants. Some faculty have prepared these types of grants, but have unable to get the matching dollars they need. Support (e.g., summer salary) is also needed for faculty who submit these types of proposals to encourage their submission. Infrastructure is also needed for postdoc training/support. An over-arching graduate program would increase our ability to get training grants. It would allow better development of themes such as "plant biochemistry from the bench to the field" because we would be more coordinated across departments from basic to applied science.

Standardization is needed for graduate program reports. Faculty have to reinvent the wheel every time they are submitted. There should also be a central repository for this information. More and more follow-on information is being requested by NSF and other funding agencies not only for undergraduate students, but also graduate students. The undergraduate data are more readily available, but the graduate student data must be obtained department by department. This is why a centralized graduate student database is needed which encompasses what is requested on proposals and annual project reports.

Annual self-reports for graduate students would also be helpful university wide. The Division of Biology has an annual report that helps keep students on track for their degree program as well as keeps their CVs up to date. It really acts as a professional development exercise. This type of annual reporting was brought up at Grad Council, but many faculty members did not want to deal with an additional report for their students.

Readily available information on resources is needed. There should be an online, searchable database on available facilities/resources and on faculty expertise and interests.

Help with faculty start-up funds is very important/SRO transparency is needed. Support for new faculty startup funding seems to be decreasing while higher amounts are needed to attract good faculty. $100k in startup funding does not cut it anymore. In the past, the BRI has been blamed for start-up funding being lower. (Millions have been spent on it and there are still major issues.) No one is sure what the reason is now for lower start-ups. A lot more transparency is needed regarding where the SRO is going. Some faculty felt that not enough SRO was going to the departments, colleges, and faculty. Historically, there are differences in how SRO is distributed to and within colleges and departments.

The FDA/USRG awards are very important. The key visible use of SRO for faculty is through the small grants programs on campus, especially the FDA/USRG programs sponsored by ORSP. These grants help faculty collect preliminary data and make contacts, often leading to other funding. It would help if these awards were larger perhaps in the $5k-10k range.

Intellectual property policy and execution are non-functioning and do not help the faculty. The policies are not ideal or even worth mentioning. Faculty get 25% for their intellectual property from KSURF but the mechanism to protect IP is not working well. KSU-IC does not have much experience working with service-oriented companies.

PreAward Services is doing an excellent job and being very flexible, but is very busy. They are great to work with but more help could be used to assist with grant proposal preparation (tables, budgets, biosketches, match assembly, etc.). They are just often too busy to help with this additional assistance.

In summary, the new VPR needs to:

1. Know that federal and state funds are decreasing and help determine what other funding opportunities need to be explored;
2. Fight for transparency of indirect funds;
3. Be strategic and flexible with available funds;
4. Assist in getting and retaining grants via cost-share assistance or other support;
5. Look at the whole picture.

Education Focus Group
January 7, 2014

Members:

Andrew Bennett, Mathematics

Sanjay Rebello, Physics
Amanda Morales, Curriculum & Instruction, Diversity Coordinator

Sherri Martinie, Curriculum & Instruction, Education
Jeff Zacharakis, Education Leadership

Joel DeRouchey, Animal Science and Industry, Research & Extension
Tanda Kidd, Human Nutrition
Jason Maseburg-Thomlinson, Continuing Education, Director, Student and Faculty Services,
Jackie Spears, Director, Science Education Center
Rosemary Boggs, Coordinator, Division of Continuing Education

ORSP Attendees:

Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Beverly Page
Caron Berges

There is a need for more and better information about funding sources. Members expressed concerns about finding appropriate funding opportunities with sufficient lead time to apply. Funding Bulletin entries often don't offer enough lead time since proposals typically take three months or more to put together, especially interdisciplinary ones. Training sessions, particularly at the department level, could be helpful in identifying funding opportunities for long term planning. Another big void is information on private foundations. One member indicated that at the university where he was previous employed, private foundation funding was often easier to get than federal money. How does it work at K-State? There does not seem to be a focus on private foundations.

Universities like U.C. Berkeley don't wait for a call for proposals but try to identify and contact an industry or foundation that might be interested in a good idea. A better understanding of institutional procedures, if any, for approaching outside funders would be very helpful. Not many people on this campus know how to approach someone who might be interested from the foundation or corporate side. Do we have to go through some formal channel and if so, how is that done? We understand that there are certain funding sources and corporations that we shouldn't contact as an individual, department or dean, but we have ideas that we would like to present to a company or a foundation. Who should we contact for these ideas to be developed and heard? The Foundation should publish a contact list of corporate/foundation "gatekeepers" on their web site we could contact for help.

New faculty need more information about the K-State extramural funding process. This information would include what kinds of assistance are available for proposal preparation, who to contact for help prior to as well as during proposal submission. Having an Associate Dean of Research in Education has been helpful. The 2013 group trip to D.C. for young faculty was transforming. There are, however, more immediate types of assistance that would be useful for those new to proposal writing. A flowchart with examples of each section available online would be useful. These are available in workshop handouts but would be really useful to access online as a proposal is being written. One of the things that can really help is the support of experienced faculty but these people don't have a lot of time. It is great to find a person you know who will look for and expect you to show up at their door when you are writing a proposal. That's a big help!

Some Education faculty researchers need help with research design. Having contacts in the Social Sciences or in Statistics who are willing to collaborate would be helpful. Preaward Services is very helpful but only at the final stages of proposal submission.

The Research Office could assist in promoting Interdisciplinary research efforts. Perhaps ORSP could put together topic-oriented workshops for STEM, underrepresented minorities, etc. Another approach is a Research Showcase to foster better understanding of current research on campus. Understanding the contributions of faculty from diverse disciplines could help promote collaborations. Hard sciences and soft sciences sometimes don't think they can interact with each other or understand their need for each other but they do need each other. The KBED/KSUIC afternoon sessions identified big university interrelated research themes and ideas and were helpful at getting faculty from different areas talking to one another. However, there was not any follow on after the session ended.

The Vice President for Research should engage more with faculty. This engagement would allow more awareness of research activities across campus and promote more communication and collaboration across departments and colleges**.** Better communication would help Deans and the Research Office be aware of existing program areas and help promote them to external audiences, including other universities who might be interested in collaborating. Through this engagement, faculty will come to understand the challenges we will be facing in the future and what assets and capacities we can leverage. A Research Showcase, organized and attended by the VPR, might be one way to help facilitate this engagement.

More information is needed on collaborations. It would help to know who our colleagues are collaborating with. In education, our faculty work with many school districts. Knowing who these are would be very helpful. This knowledge would be useful in putting together proposals because we would know who already has a relationship with a district we would like to work with in the proposed project. Knowledge of collaborations with other universities and other entities would also be useful. Some sort of system that would allow sharing of this type of information is needed.

Transparency in how SRO is distributed and used is important. Overheads have been going up, but it is not clear how the additional overhead is being used. More transparency on how SRO is used and how it helps faculty it needed. Departments rely heavily on SRO as seed funding to encourage new ideas and projects so some funding needs to stay at the department level. Colleges and departments use overhead dollars to pay for operations and help faculty do their job. However, providing a central source of matching funds is also critical for those applying for funding that requires institutional match. On multiple occasions we have been told we couldn't write for a big proposal geared for us because it had matching funds.

Use of fixed price agreements should be encouraged because the overhead amount is included in the price and industry customers don't realize it is included. As a result, they are more accepting of the budgets they are presented.

<u>Engineering Focus Group</u>

January 10, 2014

<u>Members:</u>
Dan Andresen, Computing and Information Sciences
Tin Sobering, Electronics Design Lab
David Steward, Civil Engineering
Kevin Lease, Mechanical & Nuclear Engineering
Stacy Hutchinson, Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Vikas Berry, Chemical Engineering
Caterina Scoglio, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Brad Kramer, Advanced Manuf. Institute
Kurt Barnhart, Salina Aviation
Tim Bower, Salina Engineering Technology

<u>ORSP Attendees:</u>
Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Caron Berges
Beverly Page

Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary research should be encouraged. Since multidisciplinary investigation is becoming a critical element of our research mission, the group wondered why focus groups were college by college and many of the thought questions sent to the groups were structured along departmental/college lines. It was felt that we have to figure out better ways to embrace the nature of multidisciplinary research across the University (Manhattan, Salina and Olathe). Faculty members often struggle to step out of their comfort zones and reach out to entities that are not in their traditional sphere of influence. This is true across multiple groups and faculty. Trying to determine who on campus is involved in relevant research or can provide specific support necessary to fill team gaps is problematic. A possible way to resolve some of these issues might be to enhance and/or invest in developing institutes and centers.

We also need to ensure that faculty working on multidisciplinary proposal understand how to pull disparate groups of people together. K-CARE is an example – they have a track record of successfully pulling in the right mix of people around specific initiatives. We could gain some significant insights from the experiences that this office has encountered. Another example was the Hazardous Sustainability Research Center. Although the funding has been gone for a decade or so and it is not what it once was, we could still gain valuable insights from their experiences.

Understanding our mission, focus and orientation. We need to maintain awareness of our main mission –to educate students and do research. We also need to help new professors become aware of the problems important to Kansas and help them meet key people in Kansas City, Wichita, and across Kansas. It also would be helpful if ORSP could tailor certain professional development activities and events for mid-career faculty. However, mid-career faculty members often have way too many irons in the fire to take advantage of these offerings on campus. So, time constrains should be taken into account when planning these activities.

We also need to find better ways to align proposal efforts for big, medium and small efforts. For example, should Assistant Professors focus on small or medium proposals or should they be pulling together very large proposals ($5 million and over)? Or, are the larger efforts best left with mid-career faculty and higher? Closely associated with this assessment is the need to better understand the logistical differences between big and small submissions and their associated research. While often dismissed, understanding how all of this fits together is important. Small proposals generally take a shorter amount of time to prepare and submit, while larger proposals are more complex and time consuming. Proposal experience also really helps in reducing the time both sizes of submissions take. Faculty who have not engaged in proposal effort or have seen limited success in recent efforts may not be ready for the amount of work involved in larger proposal efforts. The requirements for proposal submissions can see efforts that call for page limits in the 15 page range for the program description, but with the total number of pages ends up being 120 or more with all of the attachments and the budget! The mind set and mentality needed for relevant efforts needs to be understood by the PI who needs training across the spectrum of proposal efforts.

Establishing priorities and fitting into them can be difficult. How do you identify the top 3 priorities for engineering for example when everyone will give a different answer? You also need to factor in departmental and individual faculty needs. Right now the priorities are very generic. There was an attempt to set priorities before, but the perception is that Animal Health and Food Security are where the university has decided to invest in its future. As a result we have the BRI, NBAF coming in, and in many respects, Olathe, all because of those focused efforts. If you didn't fall under that umbrella, the perception or reality is that you've been on your own for the past 10-20 years. There are groups on campus that are following that model and thriving. As a result other groups may have disengaged from focus areas in response to the university core mission and 2025.

Communication needs improvement. We need to improve and enhance our communication and collaboration across campus and create an environment that fosters the same. We need to have a better idea of what technology is currently available across campus that could contribute to collaboration. Communication and enhancing transparency are key and we need to work on them.

K-State 2025. 2025 started out exciting. It felt like a bottom up effort focusing on what faculty need. Now it seems to have migrated to a very high level strategy that is spreading out and looking from the top down. It is unclear how everything fits together any more. We really need to look at 2025 efforts and assess how we will get there from here. The Vice President for Research can help incubate change. We need someone who can come in with brand new ideas, get things organized and help us attain the 2025 vision. Engineering has a lot of room to grow and nurture and if you advertise the changes that are unfolding are advertised as "incubation", everyone can be involved.

In some respects, K-State 2025 has morphed into a university oriented activity that has blurred some of what we understood as the research focus for colleges and departments. As the strategy and planning efforts kicked off in detail, it came down through the colleges to the departments that faculty were expected to come up with the departmental strategies needing execution. These strategies will now influence activities that affect promotion and tenure. There is so much emphasis on top-down requirements and translating them into executable activities that in some respects 2025 is distracting us from K-State's land grant mission. The perception is that the big picture is gone.

Change is never easy and working with different groups and trying to get them to talk as part of 2025 wasn't as successful as it could have been. Often times it seemed that these groups wanted change to be from the top down when it really needs to be bottom up or an effective combination of the two. Traditionally, K-State had always been a very bottom up university. 2025 has changed it to a more top down structure. However, if you want to promote interdisciplinary faculty collaboration, you must have a bottom up perspective in order to be successful. Interdisciplinary collaboration would be best served if it occurred at incubation sites where people can freely come together, work together and collaborate. Targeted Excellence was a good example of how this works. This program gave faculty a little bit of money to foster an atmosphere where people understood that it's good to work closely together. If an individual faculty member was interested, he/she got things together, and the university supported him in what he/she wanted to do. He pulled people in from all over the university. It wasn't from the bottom up but rather from both directions. This is an ideal example of how things can work. Likewise, the CEEZAD grant has been great in fostering this type of collaboration. We need to make this type of collaboration sustainable across the university.

Receiving credit grants. We need to make interdisciplinary research really interdisciplinary rather than pay lip service to it. We also need to look at our incentives so that interdisciplinary research is encouraged rather than discouraged. On one MRI grant for example, there are 6 departments involved. Since everyone wanted to get their "fair share" of the credit for the grant, 6 different accounts had to be set up even though when the money comes in it will be immediately spent on the combined effort. This approach creates a tremendous amount of administrative work and hassle for accountants and researchers alike. We need to streamline and make our process simple and effective.

If ORSP could ask central accounting to change things it would help a lot. The way credit is counted is by expenditures rather than SRO. The result is that all the credit for grant goes to the department that does the accounting (as specified by an "*" on the transmittal sheet) rather than being apportioned by who is doing the work. As a result, interdisciplinary research has become a nightmare, esp. over the last few months. In one department, there have been grant proposals that didn't go in because of fighting over where the asterisk goes. How credit is being assessed has become so critical and so crucial that it truly affects opportunity on multiple fronts (from grant submission, to research, to faculty assessment etc....). If it didn't really matter, we wouldn't be fighting over it. If we had the attitude that we're all on the same team, if we win we'll all get our brownie points, then it could be a lot more collegial.

There are also tactical and strategic issues. The tactical fix is to modify the accounting program so we can easily allocate the credit and we can get credit where it rightfully fits. The strategic fix is to embrace an attitude that we are K-State rather than we are Engineering or we are college x, y or z. We need to remove the institutional barriers that force us to orient on a particular college or departments and think about individuals and groups of people that can work together in larger efforts and truly support and sustain our ability to reach 2025.

The grand challenges that are out there are interdisciplinary and we can't go after them without working together. If you look at some of our critical research infrastructure in engineering, Beocat for example, how wide ranging is the support that this supercomputing center provides across the university? How do we better capture credit for an entity that has national impact but not necessarily on an individual level? How do we better factor in credit for an entity that supports tens-of-thousands of dollars of research but it doesn't count on the forms that are going up through the ranks for promotion and tenure? Do we support the faculty operating the shared facility for the greater benefit or do the practices behind credit potentially create undesired factors influencing the possibility of promotion?

Core facilities, sustainment and maintenance. Core facilities need to have a long term emphasis. Most of the effective core centers are really important for interdisciplinary research but the university needs to consider their maintenance and sustainment, impacts for the long term (i.e. 2025) and how best to institute user fees. It is crucial to have and get central support. The CORE facility should be treated like a department with faculty lines; the faculty duties should include writing proposals to support the facility. Otherwise, it's tough to keep equipment going without gouging the faculty. We also need to prioritize CORE facility uses and determine whether they are being well used. It is problematic that metrics have not been established for this assessment. We should also look at other university implementation of centralized research facilities (KU as an example, below). We should also do an internal assessment to determine if already have "Core facilities" and how we could better support and sustain them for the greater good. A recommendation was made for reading the book: "How Buildings Learn" by Stewart Brand.

An example of how to run a core facility is KU's Microscope Facility. This facility is upgraded every 2-3 years. To help sustain the facility, they have faculty who write proposals for instruments and keep the equipment running. They have usage charges, but the charge to external users is much higher than for KU faculty--$120 vs $35 for KU faculty. They can charge less because they have many clients and there are no salaries to support.

KSU currently has core facilities, but they are scattered. If they were centralized, they could be managed more efficiently and cost less. We need to hire faculty who sustain and maintain the facility and train others so they can come in after hours and use the equipment. Faculty would work together and learn from each other. This centralized facility would get people together to meet similar to the GIS commons at the KSU Library.

There also needs to be better communication regarding what equipment we have on campus. We have examples of faculty that have hired people and spent millions on equipment that was already here. Now we have millions of dollars in pieces of equipment that are the same. A core facility would help reduce this senseless duplication.

Space is another core facility issue. Space is hard to come by on main campus but there is space on the hill at the research park by KSU-IC. Location of facilities is also an important consideration because if a core facility is hard to get to, no one will use it. We need to determine the best place for these centralized facilities and how that will influence current and future clients who may or may not want everything centralized. The new Design Team Space in the planned Engineering addition will house the Baja Car, the Concrete Canoe, and the Steel Bridge. It will be so great because all the engineers will be working together and sharing tools. CORE facilities are more than space to work. They provide a place where people can learn from one another.

Lack of meeting space. Another issue is meeting room space. We didn't have meeting space for interdisciplinary groups for a long time so we'd have to take turns meeting in labs. Finally, our interdisciplinary group was able to use the GIS laboratory in Hale Library for a while. It was built so everyone with GIS capabilities could go there and work together; however, it was taken away. This was great but not everyone knew about it. Now Hale Library is off limits for meetings. We are now back to meeting in our labs.

Use of institutes, centers and core facilities to bring faculty together. There are many faculty who like to work by themselves and there are those who like to work together with others in a collaborative research environment. Both core facilities and institutes can help establish such a collaborative environment. A VPR with a long term commitment to these types of structures/entities would be key in helping to bring groups together. K-State already has several institutes that help support water research – KCARE, Kansas Water Institute, Urban Water Institute. There are other entities and facilities that could fall into the institute model. If we want groups to work together, CORE facilities will help but it has to be done right and we need buy-in. We also need to assess and understand better ways to execute these institutes among our three campuses in both physical construction and through virtual collaboration. The group recommended that everyone check out MIT-34 – a facility at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that was supposed to be a temporary building, but faculty loved because of the inherent freedom and flexibility of its use.

Support of new collaborations. As we bring in new collaborations, we have to be better at providing the necessary infrastructure for them to operate. An example of not doing this well is oriented on a group that came to our campus to work a new initiative. K-State put a lot of money into remodeling their new lab space and in the process ripped out all the network connections to their part of the building. This was not identified until after the tenant moved in and all the network cabling had to be replaced. This situation amounted to poor communications and processes and ended up as a fairly nontrivial waste of valuable financial resources!

Start-up packages and internal communications. We need to do better on how we work startup packages and we need to ensure that the associated funding is spent in house and as intended. We need to do much better in enabling and influencing communication of our own in-house strategic ideas, and capabilities. We also need to understand milestones for key events and we need to ensure that effective timelines are put in place and understood.

Our three Campus orientation. Few faculty have gone to K-State Olathe for a tour. Some have seen it as a type of "Plug-n-Play". You get someone who has something, they bring it in, plug-n-play, then they are off and someone else comes in. If we had K-State Olathe in the middle of our campus, it would be great – people would be coming and going and using the facility. But it is not located there and faculty need to learn how to make better use of it. We need to get more faculty to go to K-State Salina too!

Olathe is doing more corporate engagement in the animal health industry where they want to be on the cutting edge. Water resources are different. They focus more on the here and now and a cross huge landscape of technical domains. This group is working on finding funding mechanisms. We need to make sure that we don't focus too far in one direction at the expense of others like non-profits or school kids.

Overhead, SRO and IP. SRO investment and allocation should be reviewed to determine whether these are being done wisely. Some universities give up all rights to research funded by corporations – you help fund it, it's yours. We could learn from the University of Pennsylvania and their policy. U-Penn was bringing in $6-million in licensing fees but loosing 10 times that amount in investments. They found that corporations wanted to make investments but ended up unwilling to make them because they were afraid the university was going to make a "land grab" on their IP. It is one of the reasons industry is terrified of working with academia. So, the University of Pennsylvania greatly simplified and loosened its IP policy.

One of the things K-State could to obtain more corporate funding is to change its mentality – give up rights but get something if it develops. University of Michigan is using this approach for some of its research with industry. What is attractive to both industry and faculty is that we wouldn't be negotiating all the time. There is a standard set of rules and a very simplified approach. IP policy here is fairly poor in terms of what comes back to the researcher. Some uses are questionable and it doesn't seem as if there is a uniform process to it all.

Humanities, Social Sciences, Architecture and Business Focus Group
January 8, 2014

Members:

Gayle Doll, Gerontology--Family Services & Human Development
Bronwyn Fees, Family Services & Human Development, Early Childhood
Jim Machor, English

Bruch Glymour, Philosophy

Gary Brase, Psychology
Marsha Frey, History

Michael Wesch, Anthropology--Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work
Lazlo Kulcsar, Sociology--Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work
Tim Keane, Landscape Architecture & Regional and Community Planning
David Procter, Center for Community Engagement & Community Development
Katie Kingery-Page, Landscape Architecture & Regional and Community Planning

ORSP Attendees:

Beverly Page
Joel Anderson
Mary Lou Marino
Caron Berges

Provision of Research Office services to assist in organizing and preparing interdisciplinary proposals. While ORSP currently offers the assistance of a development director to help prepare and coordinate interdisciplinary research proposals, the availability of this resource should be expanded and better advertised. It's already recognized as a valuable resource for faculty who have worked with a development director. There are a lot of faculty who have great ideas but they spin their wheels because they're not sure what the next steps are.

Increasingly, funding requires partnerships between or among different departments and other entities. It's difficult to form a cohesive group because each person represents a little bit different viewpoint about approaches to the project, based perhaps on their previous sources of funding. Having a coordinator outside the academic discipline structure can provide a broader view of project and provide non-partisan guidance. Helping social scientists understand how they could have a role, perhaps in the Broader Impacts area, could be a start, and helping other disciplines understand the value of including social scientists in their proposals would be helpful too.

Another need resulting from the interdisciplinary nature of current research funding is for assistance in developing ways for faculty from diverse disciplines to identify potential RFP collaborators. ORSP could help identify the pieces that are needed to make the proposal a strong collaboration. Development of methods for identifying faculty areas of interest, expertise, funding success and knowledge of specific funders would be particularly helpful.

A related wish is for help for social scientists who are interested in working with groups outside their disciplines. Arts and Social sciences submissions are often a piece of bigger grants traditionally located in Engineering or Agriculture. Communication Studies worked with engineering faculty on a wind proposal that just happened because people knew people. Social Scientists traditionally don't look at engineering solicitations. Often social science positions are hidden in hard science RFPs. Alerting social scientists to such opportunities, perhaps as part of the Bulletin, would be useful. If we do find a proposal where we could be a part of an Engineering submission, we have to 'sell' it to the engineering folks because they don't typically think of us as collaborators. Many RFPs are now calling for social science involvement; even if they don't, inclusion of these areas would make for a richer submission, particularly with regard to NSF's broader impacts requirement. So assistance in making these connections would be very helpful.

The Research Office should provide leadership and support for Associate Deans for Research who have begun efforts to identify strategies for developing collaborations and building teams. This includes ongoing efforts to develop centralized IT databases, accessible to all, identifying faculty strengths and existing resources. Is there some way to employ the K-State 2025 software that was used to look at all the connections across the university? There could also be potential in using models of external interest databases like Academia.edu and E.S.A., (the Ecological Society of America). Such resources could help broaden the base of the faculty who actively participate in grant-funded projects. We need to get past the personality driven approach to doing business and infuse change into an institutional process. On the other hand, there is real value in face-to-face meetings such as the KBED sessions. Resources from the Research Office can expand the scope of interest groups like the one KU sponsored to form the Aging Corridor from St. Louis to Denver.

Grant writing assistance for new faculty and faculty new to proposal writing. Faculty from the Social Sciences and Humanities who are new to grant work, including established faculty, can be fearful about getting a grant—they are concerned about it being an administrative headache and don't know if there are people available to help. Some programs don't even have a mechanism to handle the small portion of the overhead which should go back to the faculty as DRA money. Central support for administering grants would be welcome.

Many of the opportunities available to the social sciences and humanities are small grants to individuals. We typically apply for these on our own because there is a perception that, if we go through the PreAward office, we would have to double our request because of the 50% indirect costs requirement. If that isn't the case, the policy needs to be explained better. Perhaps for small grants some flexibility in overhead rate charges is possible. Faculty who apply for individual grants often don't get recognition for their awards because they don't go through PreAward Services. K-State also doesn't include these individual awards in its Extramural funding totals since they don't get processed by PreAward Services. A method for tracking and counting individual awards would be welcome.

There is also a need within some departments for access to assistance with statistical analysis, as well as with proposal writing and editing. Are there specific resources to provide such assistance? Faculty members who are new to proposal writing need to be aware of the resources available to them as they begin to develop their research program. The New Faculty Institute is supposed to help new faculty with information about university services. Is ORSP involved with this institute?

While there are workshops for Grantwriting 101, there needs to be more specialized help for the different funding sources. This could include, for example, more advanced grant writing workshops that loosely follow the structure of university courses (larger introductory sessions; increasingly smaller and interactive "seminars" as the topics become more specific). Identifying those individuals who have received more specialized grants/awards and who would be willing to share their expertise would be valuable. Perhaps providing an RFP to faculty so those interested in proposal writing could register and attend a workshop specific to that RFP/sponsor would be a method for addressing this need.

The group was interested in a directory of faculty members who have produced successful proposals. If this information was available, it would allow faculty to know who to contact to obtain copies of successful submissions as well as to talk with these PIs about what is needed in a successful proposal to given funding agency. ORSP has copies of successful proposals for certain programs (e.g., CAREER), but these can only be shared with the permission of their authors.

Support for Scholarly Research, Discovery and Creative Activities. There is concern about research/scholarly activities not being valued if they do not attract extramural funding, or even if they do not attract really large amounts of funding. While there is value in identifying and supporting the 10 areas of current strength at K-State, a Top 50 Research University requires a broader perspective. You don't cut off all but the top 10 areas that are already at the level of a top 50 university. An advocate in the VPR office who can help develop and support such activities would be valuable. Perhaps a portion of SRO could help support these valuable but non-fundable activities. The University Small Grant Program (USRGs) has been very helpful for initiating such activities but the awards are quite small.

An issue for faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences who receive smaller grants is that, if the awards are for research time but are for less than regular salary, unless they can be used during a sabbatical year, faculty may have to turn them down. A provision for providing matching funds to cover salary for such situations would be welcome. Other awards that cover research costs would be more attractive to an applicant if the university would cover travel costs. Recognition for receiving individual awards would be appreciated.

Transparency for SRO Distribution. The way indirect costs are distributed is a mystery, particularly for groups who have less experience with extramural funding. SRO distribution seems to be a problem particularly for interdisciplinary research, which, if we become more involved in proposals with other disciplines, will be a concern for us. There should be more transparency and consistency with regard to SRO distribution since there seem to be different formulas for how this money is split. Some felt that individual departments have their own needs and this issue should be handled by department heads. Most members of this group have little experience with intellectual property issues and commercialization so this isn't an area of interest for them currently.

Physical Sciences Focus Group
January 15, 2014

Members:		**ORSP Attendees:**
Carlos Trallero, Physics	Christine Aikens, Chemistry	Joel Anderson, ORSP
Ruth Douglas Miller, Engineering	Richard Marston, Geography	Caron Berges, ORSP
Stefan Bossmann, Chemistry	Kevin Price, Agronomy	Beverly Page, ORSP
Virginia Naibo, Mathematics		

The existing support is helpful. The ORSP office is excellent on campus. One attendee had been at 3 other universities and their equivalent to ORSP does a fraction of what is done here. The competence of the office is very good; never heard negative comments. This office gave us such an advantage when we did the wind energy conference. Also, we are always grateful to the PreAward Services Office for the support they provide.

Better communication about what ORSP does is needed. The best help regarding communication would be to make the faculty more aware of what ORSP can do. The VPR web page doesn't have enough information about the offices that report to it. It looks like the vice president for research is the only one in the Research Office. The VPR webpage needs a smooth transition/ link to ORSP and PreAward Services. The ORSP and PreAward Services webpages are much more informative and provide information that is useful. However, a suggested addition would be to include contact names and responsibilities. There is also lack of consistency since some people have pictures, some don't. This information needs to be kept updated.

Information on what other faculty members are working on is needed. Interdisciplinary proposals/projects are becoming more common. It is important to know who across campus is working on which projects/research, to help PI's working on an interdisciplinary proposals assemble a team. Physics for example can't easily determine who to talk to in Agriculture and Education .Functional databases that provide relevant, responsive information are needed. If you don't have someone that you can go to and ask questions, it is hard to find the information because the K-State website for colleges and departments is a "hit-or-miss" proposition because there isn't any consistency. We should look at how other universities address this issue.

More interdisciplinary collaboration should be encouraged. Faculty don't often look outside their department or discipline for collaborators. This more holistic, interdisciplinary approach to research is new to a lot of faculty! Individuals need to be coached on engaging with other groups on campus. Perhaps if there were an inter-department colloquium, we could help encourage and facilitate engagement. It's hard to gauge the interests of one person but when you hear what they have to say in a colloquium, you can get more of an idea of where their interests lay. We could do better at the departmental level as well because departments don't always have all the slots filled in their seminar/colloquium series. Joint colloquiums between departments, whose faculty are collaborating, work well. Most departments have some sort of colloquium program (e.g., at the graduate level) that could be used as a forum for interaction and so faculty don't have to re-invent the wheel or duplicate effort. If we are aware of what each other does, we can find ways to work together.

Current SRO practices and metrics for gaining research "credit" are problematic for interdisciplinary projects. Because of the way SRO and "credit" are currently structured, it is very important in interdepartmental/ interdisciplinary grants to divide the SRO and expenditures correctly. If you don't, you can end up doing all of the work and getting very little of the credit for promotion. PIs should look carefully at the SRO distribution before signing the transmittal sheet. Some departments can be very assertive about SRO which puts collaborating faculty in a tough place. In general, relevant offices need to work with groups to make this process operate more smoothly, more consistently, more efficiently and more effectively.

Bring back an improved Targeted Excellence. Seed grant funding is very helpful and can lead to outside funding opportunities. It would really be nice to have Targeted Excellence money again. This program helped to bring groups together and get certain research areas started. However, Targeted Excellence was perceived by some as just funding pet projects. To avoid this criticism, a new Targeted Excellence program should utilize reviewers from outside Kansas State University.

More upper administration support is needed for centralized facilities. For example, the GIS Center is currently located in the Geography Department in Seaton hall. We have user cost basis for providing services to groups across campus. Over the last 5 years the center had 99 grants with other departments. Other colleges also want to use it for teaching which is fine as long as none of our faculty are using the lab at the time. Our department has gotten the grants, the equipment and the site licenses. The university has not invested anything in it. An advisory board was put together because faculty wanted a decision made on where the center was going to go and who was going to pay for it. Nothing came from it. We have one faculty member who's the director and he can only do so much. We can't fund an IT person full time in the lab so we're caught in that respect. In terms of the equipment, the space, and the need, there's great potential there. But with our budget we can't do much. If the university provided an IT person, we could realize the potential that this facility could have for the University as a whole. Also, we would benefit from ORSP advertising our services and letting our inside director know about new faculty who might have interest in using the GIS Center. We have the university license for the Esri software but most people who aren't trained as geographers think it's like Excel. We are trained in modelling using the software and we would love to interact with practitioners from other fields.

State and federal funding keeps decreasing: It's so important for ORSP and the VPR to be strong advocates for why universities need to conduct research. It's not just (as Ronald Reagan called it when he was the governor of California) "academic curiosity". Research generates jobs, facilitates recruiting and entices people from out of state, the country and internationally to come to K-State. It facilitates developing talent who then then enter the economy. We must address the full benefits of our academic institution and effectively market why all of our efforts, now and in the future, are important to our mission, our economy and our future. The citizens of Kansas, the Legislature, and the Board of Regents need to be reminded and informed because in many cases they just don't know or understand the impact and return on investment that comes from relevant funding. We realize that this is a tough, but it is critically important to our future abilities to serve our stakeholders. This should be a focus area for the next VPR to help us navigate the future fiscal landscape.

The VPR office should help faculty understand the statistics on numbers of proposals submitted and funded through transparent databases and uniform queries. In light of fiscal realities and decreasing support, we need to better tell the story to our legislators of how grants and industry engagement support only a small fraction of what this university does and why sustained state and federal support is so critical.

External collaboration and engagement should be enhanced: It is very helpful to bring program officers (NSF, etc.) to campus. We understand travel restrictions and other constraints but we need to pursue opportunities to bring in external agencies to campus and facilitate opportunities to work with other departments. The untenured faculty trip to DC last year helped our young faculty meet funding agency program officers.

We need to enhance our ability to communicate and facilitate bringing in potential collaborators and visitors to campus. Communication, collaboration and just informing others that one department or college is bringing someone to campus would be helpful and might provide additional insights for collaboration and engagement opportunities.

Office of Corporate Engagement should be more engaged with faculty. We don't know enough about what or how the Office of Corporate Engagement (OCE) can help us. We have worked some with OCE and the OCE has reached out to faculty but it needs to be more actively engaged with faculty for us to understand the benefits this office brings to our efforts.

KSU administrative processes should be more consistent: It would be helpful if we had a unified form for all grants as well as had information on grant specialists' responsibilities. We also need a common framework for bios for faculty across campus. There isn't consistency across much of the administrative paper work related to proposal submission and grant awards

We need to facilitate new faculty spending time with grants specialists or our departments need to provide useful information in handouts, guides or keys to help them in developing their research and proposal efforts. New faculty have so many meetings the first weeks/months it is hard to keep track of all this information without this type of support. We could use something similar for faculty searches and bringing in people for interviews in order to make the process more informative. We understand that some agencies have their own forms, DOE for example has their own spreadsheets which are awful, but we need to enhance efficiencies and understand the nuances better.

SRO should be lowered and there should be more transparency in its distribution. At one point, MIT, for example, used higher overhead rates but now these are comparable to K-State's. MIT lowered their overhead considerably for the same reason we should – to get grants! Other universities have a part of the SRO money going back to the faculty in unrestricted funds. It would be wonderful if K-State could do this as well. It's a huge morale booster. Some Departments informally return SRO to faculty, but others don't do this at all. Transparency is really important.

IP and commercialization. IP return is pretty good relatively. If faculty worked in industry, they wouldn't see any of the income but at K-State they do. Not every faculty member expects to have patent, but many are trying. IP people are very good at helping to get patents for relevant efforts. However, the group that supports technology transfer should be better at finding potential consumers to buy the things we are developing.

Veterinary Focus Group
January 7, 2014

Members:
Gary Anderson, Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology, KSVDL
Bruce Schultz, Anatomy & Physiology
David Renter, Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology
Jim Riviere, Anatomy & Physiology*
Daniel Thomson, Clinical Sciences*
Elizabeth Davis, Clinical Sciences*
Michael Kenney, Anatomy & Physiology
Bob Rowland, Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology*

ORSP Attendees:
Mary Lou Marino
Joel Anderson
Caron Berges
Beverly Page

In a VPR, we need someone who understands bridge/team-building and the mission of a land grant institution. One area is not more important than the other. However, we all have different focuses. We need to find someone who can bring us all together and feel valued and respected in each area. That will be important. Working together is the theme that I and faculty I serve want to bring to the table. There is a need to bring together various sectors both internal and external. For example, while the diagnostic lab services are well known in veterinary medicine and outside the university, they are not well known across campus. It is possible that we could help support research in other disciplines and help investigators do certain laboratory tasks more efficiently and at a lower cost than having these capabilities in individual labs. Effective communication is important. Faculty members also have partnerships with corporate entities. They receive samples from them and we can help to develop diagnostic tests. While the diagnostic lab can be viewed as primarily a service group, there is a broad grey area between diagnostics and research that increases the effectiveness of each area. The lab supports faculty research, but the research they do help develop diagnostics. This type of synergy is why we all need to work together.

There are barriers to faculty from different disciplines working together. The new VPR should promote changes to promotion and tenure that encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary research and that has a reward system to support it. Anatomy & Physiology changed their promotion criteria so that it allows interdisciplinary grant participation to count for a faculty member as if he/she were a PI. This is a step in the right direction. Also, there should be a rejuvenation of existing staff into seeing the benefits of collaborative research and investment. NBAF has had this effect on certain parts of campus.

KSU's SRO split approach can be detrimental to interdisciplinary work. At NC State, the split was straight forward and reflected each faculty member's involvement. KSU should not stay with an approach just because that is the way it has always been done. Things need to change with the time requirements**.**

Support of shared equipment is very important, but this support needs to be done properly. The University of Pittsburgh has a great model. They had a faculty member who was tenured without having written an R01. Rather, he had 2-5 percent effort on 20-25 R01s at any given time. Effectively, he was the 'go-to' person who kept up to speed with all the technologies/ techniques that were available for the equipment he oversaw. He made himself indispensable to the college. For each faculty member to keep track of the technical information for this equipment would have been an overload, but that was basically his job. He was dedicated to that. Philine Wangemann oversees a lab, a confocal-microscope core facility that was funded by a COBRE, in a similar fashion. She is a great gate keeper. She makes sure that anyone that wants to work on the microscope has a project that will benefit from the use of it because she has people run the concept by her before they use the equipment. If she is aware of a better technique, she will direct them to that technique and give them pointers. She requires everyone conducting a project to have adequate training on the equipment and they must collect their own data. She supervises Joel Sanneman who is an unclassified professional with a term position. He knows how to keep the instruments running. If that term appointment ends, there will be no one who can train new users and maintain the equipment. It would take at least a year to replace someone like that. Continuity is essential. Central support may be needed to assure this.

Recognizing and marketing our strengths to the private sector. One thing we can do that private entities can't is service training especially on very applied research projects with things that are already in the pipeline that external groups want to see if they work/can be used in other ways. We're working with veterinarians to define research outcomes in that manner. Also, veterinarians in the field need to understand why one product/approach is better than another. We can help with this. Another area we can help is to provide expertise (e.g., epidemiology) which is specialized enough that companies don't have it on their teams.

Finding the right corporate support is difficult. It's really hard to find someone in industry that wants to do the type of research that will move your research forward at the same time it meets their needs for corporate development. Therefore, there's not as big of an incentive for faculty because doing a more research-for-hire projects takes them away from getting their own research done. When the synergy between a faculty member and industry works, then it makes sense. A key faculty challenge is finding a corporate interest that would move his/her research project forward. In order for such projects to work, faculty and administration need to broadly engage industry to gauge interests. This takes time and commitment before money changes hands. Olathe needs to be a bridge between the veterinary school and the Animal Health Corridor (AHC) but we haven't figured out how to do that yet. The Companion Animal Comparative Medicine Center may help with this, but so far not too many faculty members have been involved. Additionally, the Animal Health Regulatory Science Innovation Initiative (AHIRSII) is starting to engage AHC companies. The development of this Center, the AHIRSII Initiative, has been accomplished primarily with the help of the Foundation to obtain gifts from animal health companies. This has worked well. Later it will likely involve the sponsored projects office.

Funding opportunities—KSU needs to develop and submit larger team grants because funding agencies are moving to larger, interdisciplinary awards. KSU's SRO procedures and Promotion and Tenure criteria make developing team grants difficult. As has been said previously, SRO procedures and Promotion and Tenure should be structured to encourage interdisciplinary research. Related to this, is the need for cluster hires where the recruited faculty members are not all in one department per se but are from different disciplines and support a particular focus area or strength. KSU has very little experience in this area. The first in progress is in CVM with a seven faculty cluster hire to support the new Institute of Computational Comparative Medicine (ICCM) and the Nanotechnology Innovation Center of Kansas State (NICKS). Our aspirant universities (e.g., NC State) are used to this structure and have the increased grant funding that can result.

There is a need for more facilities that support applied research. It would help greatly if we had our own research feedlot where we could do our own beef production research on campus. Now we have to "farm" this work out through CROs or other universities. We could be much more useful to industry if we had this and we could form better research partnerships. It would also help us better train our students and it would make that training more unique. We also need more animal space like the LARC provides. Now, we have to contract some of our animal work with a private facility and other universities.

We need a VPR who knows that there is tremendous potential in expanding the LARC and basic facilities/feedlots. We have researchers that are going to Iowa State or to Kelly Liechtenberg's facility to do their research. Others get the big money and we're getting the peanuts because we don't have a research feedlot or a large enough LARC. That's MILLONS of dollars we're outsourcing or turning away.

Our lab space is not functional and needs renovation/modernization. It's hard to recruit top quality faculty when you have lab space right out of the 20th century. A useful c facility might have flexible space around the periphery of the building. The center core of rooms would be dedicated to the electron- and confocal- microscopes, a well shielded electro-physiology room, and a cell culture room. Researchers conducting biochemical or electrophysiological assays at dedicated bench could go to the culture facility and do their culture right there in a room that is really set up to do that. This way each lab doesn't have to have a separate culture facility that's out in the middle of their lab. A well-shielded electro-physiology room would also be available. Currently one faculty member is running an electro-physiology lab right on top of all the transformers for the building. It's a nightmare. The new ICCM and NICKS laboratories follow this model. It is important that the old "one PI – one laboratory model" be changed to support large scale team research and distributed core laboratories. The VPR needs to be aware of these innovations as he/she interacts with outside supporters.

We need to start paying tuition for our graduate research assistants. When a prospective graduate student is told they have to pay their own tuition, they gasp. The last 3 undergraduate students that worked in one focus group member's lab went to graduate school at different universities. They were offered between $28,000-$30,000 in stipends plus full tuition waivers. That was 3 offers from 3 different institutions and each student had more than one offer. That's standard! We cannot compete for the best students. They go somewhere else. Most of our graduate students are second language students, locals who want to stay in the area, or students who are interested in being near the animal health industry. They want to do the research that is done here or work for a particular major professor.

IRB and IACUC processes needed to be streamlined. There are ways to get through these processes more efficiently and effectively than we do here. We should look to other universities like Cornell for help in this area. The whole regulatory burden needs to be re-evaluated and streamlined. The online safety protocol presentations are redundant, not effective, not well annotated but they do hold up the letter of the law. Some of the modules need to be combined to reduce redundancies. It would be good to have a good set of university-wide safety presentations that could be used as a prescreening tool when an applicant makes the short list.

New students and faculty need safety and compliance training. We should have new employees and students go to a central facility to watch safety presentation prior to entry into the lab. This way when people show up to work they can start right away without faculty having to train them. They should also be allowed to do this before they are on the payroll. Basic training being offered prior to students working in the lab and them attending it would show that they have a commitment to working in the lab. Now, it takes 1-1/2 to 3 days to just get through the trainings. Faculty aren't saying we don't want to do it; we just want it to be done better and more efficiently. The group agreed though that their experience with IACUC is 1000% better now than when they first arrived.

PreAward Services interactions are great now compared to when older faculty members first arrived. They don't have to go to Fairchild Hall anymore because the College of Veterinary Medicine has a dedicated grants specialist in each department. This has been a tremendous help and it is very well coordinated.

More things need to be online for signoffs to streamline approvals. At our aspirant universities, everything is online. KSU has started doing this, but we need to keep moving in this direction.

More support and standardization are needed on the post award side. It would be great if there was more help with some of the reporting on the post-award side like there is on the pre-awards side. The 2025 university awards spreadsheet is a mess. The University doesn't have a good mechanism in place to understand how projects, programs, or research dollars are counted and there are different ways of counting them. Nothing is standardized.

Help with NIH mentoring. For our many of our Veterinary faculty, NIH funding is the bottom line. It is where our research money comes from. The VPR could develop relationships with the higher levels at NIH and the office could help sponsor bringing a director or program director to KSU for a seminar at least once per year. We could offer new hires an NIH grant writing seminar and help with getting new faculty to the NIH campus to see what is available and meet program directors to help jump start their careers. Information/training on K-awards would be helpful.

While NIH is an important source of funding, it is harder and harder to get funding form this source. Thus, other potential funding sources should be considered. One such source is NSF; Training on submitting to this agency would be helpful. We also should look at increasing funding from industry.

Things to suggest for the VPR:

- Should promote team building and facilitate bringing together faculty from across campus whose research areas complement one another. Building Centers of Excellence (e.g., infectious disease, vaccinology) would aid in this.
- Provide seed money (e.g., Targeted Excellence) to get initiatives started and to generate preliminary data.
- Should care about the livestock industry and the importance of animal health.
- Should understand the land grant mission.
- Should streamline safety training and IRB/IACUC processes.
- Should provide support for increasing NIH funding across the university.

Associate Deans for Research Council Focus Group

February 12, 2014

Members:		**ORSP Attendees:**
Ernie Minton, Agricultural Experiment Station	Noel Schulz, Engineering	Mary Lou Marino
Wendy Ornelas, Architecture	Jerry Jaax, Research Compliance	
Beth Montelone, Arts & Sciences	Carol Shanklin, Graduate School	Joel Anderson
Stacy Kovar, Business Administration	Timothy Musch, Human Ecology	Beverly Page
David Stewart, Continuing Education	Marcellus Caldas, International Programs	Caron Berges
Richard Potter, Corporate Engagement	Michael Haddock, Libraries	
Linda Thurston, Education	Prema Arusa, Olathe	
Frank Blecha, Veterinary Medicine	Kurt Barnhart, Salina	
Paul Lowe, Preaward Services		

K-State needs to pay tuition for our graduate research assistants. The members of the ADRC felt that one of the most pressing problems facing K-State regarding research was that the university doesn't have a policy of paying graduate research assistant (GRA) tuition. We are the only university in the Big 12 that does not do this. Our policy for including GRA tuition on proposals is also very inconsistent as applied across colleges. As a result, our faculty members are not able to compete for the best graduate students, hurting their capacity to do research. It also affects our ability to recruit international graduate students. GRAs are subject to tax consequences even if they are part of a grant where their tuition is paid. Graduate teaching assistants are not even though their tuition is paid. There was some concern expressed that our inconsistency in how tuition is handled puts us at risk with federal funding agencies. There were assurances that K-State's accounting policies protect us from this. However, the current tuition policy is still a very real problem. To cover the GRAs who are not typically included on a research grant would require about $1.5 million each year. The new Vice President for Research needs to figure out what it will take to fix this problem and implement it. This issue has been "bounced around" for at least ten years. It needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

SRO transparency and distribution. The group noted that one of the consistent issues brought up in the faculty focus groups was the lack of SRO transparency and the difficulties in handling shared credit on interdisciplinary projects. Everyone agreed these were important issues, but it wasn't clear whether ORSP can do anything about them. These are really Sponsored Program Accounting (SPA) issues. During the discussion, a recommendation was made that SPA become part of the research office. Further discussion focused on ways in which the Research Office could play an effective role in addressing these issues.

The VPR needs to be engaged within the university to help create global best practices and ideas that help us move forward to 2025 and help provide support to the Deans and Associate Deans as they try to move their colleges forward. However, there are challenges with different departments having different SRO policies. Many faculty members think SRO belongs to them. What's really true is that 100% of SRO goes to Central administration. They choose to give a percentage to the colleges and the colleges choose to give a percentage to the departments and they choose to give a percentage to their faculty. At any time, any of those routes could close. It could cause a riot but that's the way it is.

Currently, SRO is mandated by a SPA memo between colleges and department heads. That memo can be and has been changed; it reflects a dated approach resulting from our historically decentralized way of operation. This is the only campus of the 6 where I've been that SRO distribution is dictated by such an agreement. It has created a culture where college, departments, and faculty think the SRO they receive is a right rather than a privilege. This attitude is also a residual of the decentralized culture that we've had forever and ever.

SRO transparency does not mean that there has to be an annual report of how every cent of SRO on this campus is spent. However, there should be a clearer distribution pattern and a much clearer understanding of the services provided by central administration with the funds that they retain. When I see comments from faculty wanting more centrally supported core facilities, they also want increased USRG and FDA awards, and they want more SRO returned to their departments--- they don't understand that those are mutually exclusive goals. The need for centrally run CORES was loud and clear in the Focus Groups but there are only so many places this money can come from and the key one is SRO. It's going to take a redistribution of SRO to make centralized core facilities happen; we've talked about such a redistribution for years and it just hasn't happened.

College-level grant specialists. Many grants specialists have been added to provide internal resources. This may be a part of what the central SRO would pay for. One of the Focus Groups commented that things have gotten better since they added a new grants specialist to Vet Medicine. The College of Agriculture added two Grants Specialists, Engineering added one and is trying to add get a second one. These are examples of colleges creating additional infrastructure to support research even though it's not centrally funded.

Obtaining the data needed to assess progress is very difficult. SPA expenditure information is almost impossible to obtain in the form or manner needed. It is like pulling teeth to get this information! This difficulty is particularly problematic since research expenditures is a key metric for 2025. PreAward Services information is also hard to obtain in the form needed. The data warehouse should help with this issue, but it is not clear when this tool will be available and whether data will be usable in the form needed by the Associate Deans for Research (ADR) and their colleges.

Award and expenditure data are very important to see trends in our funding and be proactive. Right now we are reactive. If a colleague wants to look at how many proposals he/she had this year versus last or how many dollars were received, who is doing similar work, etc., the information should be easily accessible for use. We cannot do that now because it will probably take 24-40 person hours to get that data. Neither ORSP nor the ADR/colleges have the people to do this. Reports have to be converted from Access to Excel and the data has to be cleaned and sorted into the categories needed for reporting. It's not a simple process. Often ADR develop the reports/metrics needed by hand.

A poll was done to see if e-sign was in line with our proposals and could be used as a shadow system to obtain the needed data. It was found that there were about 50 proposals that weren't e-signed that were on the PreAward Services books. So using e-proposals is not an option because it doesn't include everything.

The way "credit" is currently tracked is really problematic and a barrier to interdisciplinary research. The whole credit situation is a huge issue. I thought that the percentages reported on the proposal transmittal sheet were how dollars were credited to departments with regard to the 2025 metrics. I then learned that there was an internal document that does that and is based on expenditures, but you have to be an "accounting" department for expenditures to be credited to you. One ADR college was part of a million dollar MRI that was funded but they were a Co-PI. It was discussed with the lead department and the result, so that everyone could receive credit, was a budget that had 4 accounting departments with each receiving $250,000. If that had not been done, three of the department's would have been involved in a million dollar grant but would not have gotten credit. Some department heads have gone to a policy that if they don't have a budget, they won't sign off on the proposal. It's a headache for PreAward Services and SPA because now there has to be a budget for each PI. It's also detrimental to interdisciplinary research because it's such a hassle for PIs to work with each department and set up the accounting with them. It's also a pain for the PI's department. Many faculty members in the focus groups were very supportive of interdisciplinary research and see that it's the future. However, they see the issue of how credit is obtained at K-State as a key barrier to this type of research.

Facilitating graduate student involvement in interdisciplinary research can be difficult. What was said about "credit" being a barrier to interdisciplinary research is also true on the graduate student side for faculty wanting to serve on interdisciplinary PhD programs. Faculty members tell me they are not recognized when they co-sponsor students with other colleges. As a result faculty often will say they just want a student in their own department even if the student would benefit more from an interdisciplinary program. Even if we can't count it for Topeka, isn't there an internal way that we can give credit to faculty involved in these multi-disciplinary activities?

Part of 2025 is to increase the number of programs. One way is to have interdisciplinary doctoral programs that are cooperative among colleges and departments. The question is how do you count that? When our department transferred from Arts & Sciences into Human Ecology, we gained an umbrella PhD program. We had channeled our students through the College of Veterinary Medicine. Now because there isn't any cooperation between Human Ecology and Veterinary Medicine, our new Department Head put our interdisciplinary doctoral students in Human Ecology. This will decrease the number of doctoral students in A&P in the College of Vet Medicine and this will hurt that doctoral program even though it's been interdisciplinary for 20 years. How you count and present that to Topeka is problematic. Right now we have to choose between the two departments.

KBED events are initiated by KSU-IC, but they need academic and VPR assistance to take them to the next phase. As currently run, everyone meets, a lot of discussion happens, but it ends there. There needs to be some mechanism to continue the momentum started at these meetings. If anyone college or department takes the lead, it risks its efforts being seen as a takeover. If these initiatives were promoted centrally, some of this misperception could be avoided.

The VPR position should be viewed as a position on equal footing with the Provost. Because K-State's previous structure had the Vice Provost for Research reporting to the provost, the new position of Vice President for Research with separate and equal status has not yet been fully realized for the VPR. A new VPR will help change this perception and help elevate the status of this position. The new VPR can/should promote the value of research to external audiences in Topeka, D.C., and to residents of Kansas. There also should be a good working relationship between the VPR and the Provost. Finally, the VPR should work with the ADR to help make them more effective in their roles.

ORSP training and support should continue. The training offered by ORSP has been very helpful to faculty, postdocs, and graduate students. This training needs to be continued and enhanced under a new VPR. Having support for large grants is very beneficial for interdisciplinary proposals. It helps take the pressure off one person and encourages faculty to be PIs.

There is no centralized support for Postdoctoral fellows. Postdocs are really a forgotten group. They do not belong to any one central entity. There isn't an organized program for their mentoring. This issue should be looked at by the VPR.

An expertise inventory for every college is needed. Engineering requires untenured faculty to provide bios. We have a template that they must follow. We are hoping to do this for everyone and make it so that others can use this information to develop an expertise inventory. We need this information for every college.

Grants Specialists Focus Group
February 21, 2014

Members:		**ORSP Attendees:**
Terri Fayle, Agriculture	Ginger Biesenthal, Veterinary Medicine	Mary Lou Marino
Lisa Duer, Veterinary Medicine	Amy Brusk, Veterinary Medicine	Joel Anderson
Carole Lovin, Engineering	Bailey Starnes, Veterinary Medicine	Beverly Page
Lori Garwick, Veterinary Medicine	Marisha Eck, Agriculture	
	Dawn Caldwell, Agriculture	

Initial comments/general orientation. After reviewing the information from the other focus groups, I found that it helped to put the questions into perspective and make some comparisons. From that, I was able to identify four primary challenges the Research Office has.

1. Money. Everyone is getting tasked with many responsibilities that need appropriate resources and funding. A challenge then becomes finding necessary funding and aligning it with the responsibilities. Until that occurs, the priorities aren't really feasible. Related, there is a misconception that ORSP has all the money because of how faculty perceive or misunderstand the apportionment of SRO. In reality, the Research Office is the last one to get money. Our understanding is that it (SRO) goes to central where they assess available resources, prioritize their use and whatever is left is what you receive.

2. Receptiveness to Complaints. We all can be hyper-critical about how we execute research. That can be good and bad. We need to create a more transparent and responsive approach to hearing and listening to concerns. Centrally there isn't openness to complaints. Often times, when voicing concerns, many people feel like they get a "talk-to-the-hand" response rather than someone listening to the concerns and figuring out what can be done. There isn't a kind of collaborative response to make things better. Being receptive to complaints, concerns and need is going to be a key issue into making things better across campus; otherwise, we aren't doing the due diligence necessary to attain our goals!

3. K-State Research as a whole (ORSP, PreAward Services, Sponsored Projects Accounting) is its own worst enemy. One reason I wanted to review the Focus Group Report was that I wanted to compare it to the Research Infrastructure Report. It's an interesting comparison in that it's almost an exact duplicate. This makes it appear that in 4 years, we haven't gotten anywhere! Faculty members in your focus groups are complaining about the same things they were complaining about 4 years ago. But, when you look at the research infrastructure report, a number of things in here have been proactively addressed. The similarity between the two reports tells you that people don't know about what has been done. The Research Office needs to do a better job of communicating its successes.

4. The difficulty in satisfying all of us when we all have different needs. Different colleges and departments have different needs. Some are complaining about things that are not relevant to others and are viewed differently by each. For example, some concerns identified by some focus groups are not relevant to my college. Although they may be relevant to their particular situation, they present a totally different perspective and need than my college has. We have a wide ranging orientation from educational and research perspectives. Some colleges don't fall within a typical research orientation and as a result have difficulty finding funding. I'm not sure that the university needs to find other outside sourcing opportunities for them or should fill that funding gap. This is a philosophical decision that's going to have to be made beyond any of our pay grades. It boils down to 2025 and whether there is a vision to look forward. Some focus groups expressed concerns over the perception of "haves" and “have nots”. There needs to be a way – I won’t call it transparency – but just in communicating the needs of disparate entities across campus. We have to effectively implement that vision in a manner that does not artificially create a perception of “have” and “have not”. Getting to the essence of an inclusive strategy and environment that addresses the needs of the entire university will be important as we move towards 2025.

The benefit of the Focus Groups. You should do focus groups every semester for the entire university. The Research office could present for 30 minutes on the complaints received previously and how you are addressing them to move forward. Faculty could then provide input. This process would create an open environment where faculty can make complaints and recommendations that are addressed in the next quarter. It would be good for the university at large to know what recommendations in the infrastructure report have been addressed and which ones still require action. This information should be more publicly accessible, either by a website or by some public meeting or a monthly newsletter or some other sort of communication.

The value of having dedicated grant specialists in the colleges. It is interesting that Veterinary Medicine has 5 grants specialists and Agriculture has 3. Engineering only has one. We are often under heavy workloads and tight deadlines when we work with PreAward Services. In a recent proposal, I was only able to review 4 parts of it due to my other responsibilities. Because of my experience in PreAward Services, I was able to give those 4 critical parts a full review so our representative in PreAward Services didn’t have to do too much additional review except for the budget, which PreAward Services is required to review. Despite the deadlines and amount of material in the proposal, it worked out well. I like this model and I think there should be more people hired in the colleges, so our extramural funding amounts can go up. For example, when the grants specialists first started in Vet Med, awards were $6-million and now they are at $19-million.

If you look at the amount of awards and number of submissions that have gone in, it’s double from 10 years ago. Yet the staff in PreAward Services did not grow in response to this increase. The office has just done what it could do. The new President realized via the Infrastructure report that there were some problems and PreAward Services was given a couple more positions. In comparison to other universities, we are still on the low side. It’s a situation where there’s never time to do everything because the grants specialists are under so much pressure.

Policies/procedures and satisfying the needs of the different colleges. I understand there have to be policies and procedures in place but there also has to be some flexibility built in to that so that each college gets what it needs. Also, we need to review and influence policies and processes that seem to be very old or are written in a one-size fits all perspective or in some cases, not written at all. Having more written PreAward Services Office Policies and Procedures would help. For example, it would be helpful, especially for someone new, if the grants specialists (in PreAward Services and in the colleges) had a checklist for USDA proposals, NIH proposals, NSF proposals, and then other proposals in general that they could use in-house. Without this, we learn about new procedures (or old procedures we just didn't know about) on the fly when proposals are due.

I actually have developed checklists of things to review that I learned on my own. My personal goal when I work with my faculty is to make it so when a proposal goes to PreAward Services, all they have to do is quickly skim through and submit it. As a departmental administrator, I think that’s what we should be doing. I tell my faculty that my job is to do the nitty-gritty so all they have to worry about is the narrative (i.e., the science). There are time issues, however, when faculty wait until the last minute to tell you about a submission. Also, PreAward Services has gotten so busy that sometimes all they have time to do is to verify that all documents are there and then press “submit”. They just don’t have time to do a thorough review. That is where the Grants Specialists in the colleges can help.

Priority of proposals for review and submission. One thing we’ve heard is that there are very conscientious faculty who turn in their proposals early but then their proposal get bumped or pushed aside because someone else turns in a last minute proposal that is due sooner. The proposal that was turned in early was likely of higher quality because the faculty took time with it but it may not get any more attention in PreAward Services. The bottom line is that because of the number of proposals being generated, some don’t get the time they deserve even when they are turned in early.

When I meet with untenured faculty, I sit down with them and together we review all the requirements from that RFP. We decide who’s doing what right away and write it all down. It includes target dates and a timeline. I work with the 5 day rule that PreAward Services has. Then, I tell the faculty that if they want me to help them upload files or anything else, I will need their materials 5 days earlier than when PreAward Services needs it. Often they’re late because they ask their mentors to review it for them and it comes back to them at the last minute. The young faculty members are learning from their mentors that PreAward Services will take their proposals up to the very last minute. The five day rule needs to be enforced. In my past experience at NCURA meetings other, particularly larger universities, enforce a 5 to 7 day rule.

I don't know whether we are of a size that can afford a strict enforcement of such a rule because if a proposal doesn't go in it won't get funded. As a compromise, I tell my faculty that the budget has to be done one week ahead of time and then everything else is due a few days before the deadline. However, there are chronic, last minute submitters and we need a better way to deal with them.

The push to 2025--Quality vs Quantity. As long as I’ve been here, there’s been a push for people to write and submit proposals. Maybe 20 years ago no one was submitting, but that is not true now. But, we still have that same mentality-- “Just get them to write; just get them to submit". I have been trying to make the case that it is better to take the time, plan, and write a great proposal that has a better chance of being funded. Getting funded is the key, not just submitting proposal after proposal. There is some merit in submitting to get review comments back to help faculty submit a fundable proposal the next time. However, if a proposal is being submitted over and over again and not being funded, this is an inefficient use of resources. There needs to be a greater push for high quality submissions. Some faculty members have to learn this skill. Sometimes we have to deal with international faculty where English is not their first language. In these cases, an editor would be really helpful.

We need to do a better job working with junior faculty to help them be better prepared in submitting proposals. For example, when a department head sees transmittals and budgets that come through several times, the department head (or mentor) may need to talk to the faculty member saying “I know you’ve been trying to get this idea funded through several different agencies but maybe you need to take a little different approach”. Unfortunately, there are some department heads who are very pro-active and some who are not.

Editors. Engineering has an editor that has a schedule of charges so it’s charged back to the department just like the editor who edits for formatting as opposed to technical writing; however, there aren’t any readily available or known editing services on campus for faculty. Our editor works part-time but she reviews proposals, papers, journals, posters, and anything related to research. We’ve been doing surveys and it's an excellent service. Extension had editors, but they didn't do proposals. We have implemented a 5-day rule for our editor, but depending on the editor's workload they can opt to review it or not. To my knowledge the editor has yet to decline any. Editing is on my checklist; if I get a proposal in time, I edit it myself. I suggest that if faculty wants the grants specialists to review it thoroughly, they better get it in in time to read.

Most editors just edit for grammar; it would be great to have a technical editor. An option might be the Writing Center that is run by the English department, but it is currently focused more toward undergraduate and graduate students so they can learn to write papers. It would be beneficial if we could see how difficult it would be for the Center to add a technical writing module that's not necessarily oriented at graduate or undergraduate students but instead is oriented toward faculty. Some faculty pay for an outside service because it's the only way to get it done.

Proposal teams. A recent example of how a proposal team can work well is the USAID Post-harvest proposal effort. That proposal was awesome. I think it came off that way because of the focus, experience and drive on the part of the PI and his attention to detail and to planning. He thought ahead, planned, set deadlines, and kept the group focused on their next steps. Most importantly, the group met regularly. It truly was a team. I wish more of our PIs had the ability to lead in this way. The result was a great proposal which was funded.

Mentoring. In some cases, our untenured faculty do not have mentors assigned or the mentors are too busy with their own science to really mentor appropriately. One of my roles is to make sure the untenured faculty members understand the K-State process. We're trying to determine a mentoring system that motivates established faculty to mentor. I am not a scientist so if the young faculty give me their science to read, I can't tell you if it is correct or appropriate for the program they are submitting to. They can call their program managers and talk to them, but this doesn't replace technical support in their Department.

I don't think Vet Med has an official mentoring program but a lot of the junior faculty members in Clinical Sciences tell me that they would like a particular faculty member to read their proposal. If I pro-actively "bug" the younger faculty members about the deadlines, it provides them with the time so they can submit their proposals to an unofficial mentor. Other departments in Vet Med have many faculty who are 100% research, but in Clinical Sciences/the hospital, faculty are on clinics all the time. So, they try to squeeze in research. It is not forefront in their mind that they have a deadline in 2 months. As a result, I need to remind them so that they'll have time to have a mentor read through it and submit a better quality proposal.

Usually, I will give a proposal to PreAward Services 3 days before it is due. I tell faculty if they aren't ready 3 days out, then they need to work directly with PreAward Services. In some cases, faculty have their part ready but have to wait on co-PIs to get things submitted. We can help to an extent if they need to take proposals to their mentor at the last minute. Because of the co-PI's lateness, the mentor may not always have time to do an adequate review.

If untenured faculty went to their mentor once they received their review comments to discuss how they could write a better proposal the next time, it would be great. However, getting the mentors to work with the untenured faculty can sometimes be a challenge.

It's important to follow the funder's guidelines. Last year at the untenured faculty DC trip, one of the NSF Program Managers was very firm about the guidelines. He said when the RFP says "must" or "should," the submitter needs to understand that they need to factor that in to their proposals! He knew he was talking to untenured faculty so he was quite stern. So when I came back from the trip, I had my student highlight all "must", "should", and "required" in the new GPG and I sent it to the untenured faculty. This highlighted GPG should be online as well. One of our faculty members asked the Program Manager why after 10 submissions, his proposal was not funded. The NSF Program Manager said that is way too many times to submit. If it came across his desk, he would have said "you're not getting funded, especially if it's the same idea". The faculty member finally was funded shortly thereafter. So, persistence does pay off! We were so excited for him.

Indirect Costs, SRO policy and use. Many faculty ask questions about specific college or department approaches to faculty obtaining and using SRO. In some cases, faculty wanted to use SRO for proposals or other efforts and were told "no", but the same type of request will get raised again and will be approved. There needs to be consistency in our policy. Right now it seems that we go in cycles with how we approach this particular issue, or we apply policy on a case by case basis. In some cases, grants specialists operate off of an existing policy and don't know about individual exceptions until the cost-share forms come in.

Indirect costs (cost-share) waivers should be consistent. It's much easier when there's consistency so we don't have to go through a mind-numbing calculation to figure out if we're getting taken for a ride by a waiver request. We try to reiterate to faculty over and over and over what we understand to be the policy. When the policy is changed, modified or waived, the Research Office shoots us in the foot. For example, a faculty member submitting an NIH supplement requested that there be no indirect costs (IDC) because NIH gave her a set amount. We fought and fought with the PI saying "An NIH submission has to include IDC". We have an IDC rate with the federal government. The assistant professor told us "no", the program officer said there was no IDC, so she got a waiver signed for no IDC. However, when she received the funding, a lesser amount was listed because NIH took out IDC. This inconsistency just created unnecessary drama.

SRO Transparency. SRO has been a common theme in every focus group. There are differences in how each college and department uses SRO. It gets to the essence of SRO and transparency. In looking at the differences in policy implementation for SRO, some of the complaints aren't necessarily germane because of the different ways that each college or department handles their SRO. Each college and department used SRO in particular ways and not everyone needs to know how everybody spends their SRO. That's the department's prerogative. Someone may not understand how SRO is distributed and raises concern because someone else gets 14% and they only get 5%. Some of the complaints on SRO are really out-of-bounds and shows a need to better educate all on its use.

Faculty need to be educated on IDC and how central administration uses it. Cindy Bontrager sent out an email regarding why IDC was collected and where it went a couple of years ago. You hear rumors about how all the VPR money is going to fund the BRI but really, the VPR is still funding start up packages. They have a limited amount of money. This is always true. I try to educate my faculty by telling them that central administration pays for the lights, the building repairs, etc., etc. It would be nice to have bullet points or talking points to provide more transparency.

SRO and for-profit companies. Faculty, getting sponsored research from a for-profit company that does not want K-State to include IDC, will ask us to not include this cost. If they don't like the answer, they work the system until they get it waived. We understand that there is policy in PreAward Services from about 10 years ago that identified what was and was not allowable when working with for-profit companies. We just need to know what is and what isn't allowed and what the policy is that we are using when working with for-profit entities.

There are examples where we have had faculty working on relationships with companies and submit budgets that may not be to their advantage or to that of the college or university. As a result we sometimes receive budget submittals that don't capture the full spectrum of costs. In these cases, the result has been reduced budgets for faculty in executing these efforts because we have to factor in things after the fact. If we don't include indirect costs we are subsidizing a company's research.

In Agriculture, we include IDCs. If faculty are going to do research for a for-profit company, they have a 'fixed price form' that they use (the testing and evaluation form). This form encourages faculty to build IDC into their budget because it does not show that IDCs are included. You present it to the client as a bottom line or as loaded rates so it's built in to the price. For Vet Med, we work each one individually but there are some companies like Pfizer (Zoetis now) where we have a master agreement. In the latter case, we do an addendum but each budget is worked individually. A lot of sponsors want to see the budget but it really ends up being a case by case basis depending on the sponsor. We use a draft MOA that shows the bottom line on how much an effort is going to cost. We send an internal budget to PreAward Services that will show salary, benefits, and all of that taken out. When I communicate with the company, I'm giving them the bottom line and a simplified budget that does not show IDC.

I understand we need to be an advocate for the faculty but we need to better educate them on policies. I had a faculty member who just started and was consistently sending numbers to for-profit companies without going through me first. He would not include overhead. My department head, I don't know if it was her responsibility or not, but she put her foot down and told the faculty member that he would just have to figure out how to do the project with IDC taken out because she was not going to pay it. If he would have challenged us and gone above us, I don't know how it would have gone but I'll tell you, he hasn't done that again!

A concern with fixed price agreements came from a Sponsored Programs warning. They indicated that if you do a fixed price agreement and the sponsor ever comes back and wants to see any detail on the budget then it's no longer a fixed price agreement. You would not be able to rollover left-over money into a restricted fees account. We've had to be careful with that. There have been instances when a company has come back to us and indicate they wanted us to justify how we were using the funds for particular efforts. It's not like we charged unjustifiable expenses to the grant so there was nothing to hide.

Priority and understanding where proposals are in the review and submission chain. There was a comment in another focus group about transparency of where awards are in the process. There really is a super wide assortment of databases that are used for tracking. Currently, we have to pick and sort through all these databases to get this type of information and we don't have access to all of them. Additionally, offices have developed shadow systems to track needed information they don't have ready access to from central administration. It's crazy; we should be somewhat embarrassed that finance expects our departments to use QuickBooks to match their departmental budgets. I think having a university-wide ERP/FedEx type system with everything in it that we all have access to would be great. It would probably be a multi-million dollar investment, but I'd like to see us change our culture so things aren't so separated.

One of the things that came out, especially in the Agriculture focus group, was that the system for tracking federal proposals was okay, but the corporate proposals are not well tracked. Deadlines drive the system but often corporate proposals don't have deadlines per se like federal proposal do. This result is that federal proposals need to be processed and the corporate proposals get pushed to the bottom of the priority list. It's not because grants specialists are lazy, it's because they have so many things on their plate and the corporate proposal deadlines are not screaming at them at that time. I have one sitting on my desk right now that I need to do a transmittal sheet for. Once that's done, the only way I can follow up on it once it leaves my desk is by phone call after phone call to try to determine where it's at in the process.

There was a statement in one of the focus group reports that said there should be "first in, first out" process for submittals. It's a problematic issue no doubt with all the federal deadlines. It also underscores that we may need to have different processes for different types of submissions. For example, it might be helpful to have someone who is dedicated to corporate where it is first in, first out and because you don't have such rigid deadlines. This approach would separate these types of proposals from the deadline-driven proposals. If we had established processes and a generic template, it would make things simpler. We could better coordinate with PreAward Services and it would make working with the sponsor easier and more efficient.

In Agriculture, proposals are often dependent on the growing cycle. For these, it is really important to know where they are in the process. But sometimes we don't and faculty need to know there are ways (e.g., overdrafts) to work around these delays. They just need to talk to us. Also, they should inform us and PreAward Services up front about the need for a quick turn-around to help avoid these conflicts with the growing season.

K-State 2025. There were many comments about 2025 and its clarity – how it started ground up and now its top down, and people are confused. I don't know about how it started and where it is now, but I know it is confusing. It doesn't have anyone doing the "rah-rah" it needs----it doesn't have a leader, someone who is dedicated to it. When you read our college's strategic plan, it starts out great and then it gets really fuzzy – it's kind of like reading a bad proposal! Page one, I get where they're going. I get to page two thru 15 and then I am lost. If there was a strategic planner involved with the plan, it would be clearer and more coherent. It would it have someone out in front of everyone who is a leader and driving it. This would make it successful. Without this leader, it's everyone's second job and no one has time to figure it out and focus on it.

With respect to 2025, our department head pushes it – he's really good in highlighting it during administrative meetings. He wants to know how we can get our research out there. He's having me look for funding for renovation of laboratories and look at unique funding sources rather than just the R01s and R21s to get us where we need to go.

Sometimes strategic plans are written and just put in a drawer. Really, it's the responsibility of the management and administration for the plan to be part of their job so that it does not end up in a drawer. If it's a good strategic plan, it is part of what we do. I think what has happened with 2025 is that people are not internalizing it and don't see it as part of how they operate. We have not made the transition from how we have done business in the past to how we see ourselves doing business in the future.

2025 is not written clearly. There's no implementation plan that I can see. Everybody is doing their own thing. It's not really a cohesive effort. Implementation is always the rub. You can do all this great thinking and put all these neat ideas down on paper, but it's the implementation part that's the hardest.

For all of us worker bees, I was on the 2025 project team for our college and one of my comments was I want to see myself in it. The comment back to me was not everybody is going to see themselves in it. This was a way of saying there are going to be some areas trimmed out completely and gotten rid of because they are not part of the mission. Well that's all fine and dandy, but those of us who are left need to see ourselves in it. I think there are enough worker bee level people that if they can't see themselves in the strategic plan it just won't be accomplished. The plan has to be clear at all levels to be implemented.

Core facilities and interdisciplinary research. There's definitely a need for Core facilities; in order to conduct good research you need good facilities. If you have really good facilities, this also opens up the opportunities for more work to come from other universities that don't have laboratories to perform some work and they can sub-award it out. Adequate laboratories gets to the essence of realizing 2025.

There is a need for a university-wide equipment list. University-wide we need to better understand and increase our knowledge of available equipment. It is a big concern. As an example, a Co-PI was trying to find a piece of equipment (some type of dryer) because it got cut out of his proposal. He spent time calling around campus to find one. If we had some sort of university-wide equipment list he wouldn't need to spend so much time doing this. A list would also prevent the purchase of duplicate pieces of equipment. The information for the engagement and research centers on the research website is inconsistent. Some of the entities show what kind of equipment they have, but some just have a list of publications.

K-State 2025 metrics and credit. Everybody approaches SRO and reporting credit differently. When I was in PreAward Services, if Biology did the accounting, they wanted all the SRO credit. Now, there is more of a sharing mentality which is good for 2025 because now everyone is getting credit for what they are doing. There are some in Engineering and Vet Med that have had differences of opinion in how things should be split – sometimes it's time, sometimes it's money. Sometimes the SRO goes back to a particular department because they are contributing something else so there is a trade-off that you don't always see when you look at the paperwork. It's hard for our level to deal with it because sometimes upper administration doesn't want to deal with it.

Faculty members negotiate very well at their level. It's the next level up that wants to know why they aren't getting their SRO. Faculty members just want to do the research. As faculty identify efforts and negotiate collaboration, they seem content with what is put on the transmittal sheet. The challenge is when the next level up starts asking questions, particularly if faculty have not kept their department heads in the loop about the negotiations that have taken place relative to the submission.

The metrics for 2025 have created an artificial "credit" tracking system. The accounting system is the issue because if you're not an accounting department, central doesn't count it; credit is based on expenditures and not SRO. There's got to be a better way than actually setting up accounting in each department for inter-departmental research. It's creating more "silo-ing" and we're not one big happy family anymore. This situation really started getting worse about six months ago. It's always been this way but it's getting worse, and it's going to be very time consuming for everybody. We have metrics that are dictating how we do business but they are causing confusion or worse, causing internal conflict.

Appendix

ORSP Focus Group Discussion Questions

1) What focus areas should the VPR office/ORSP Office orient on to help?
    a. Individuals (i.e. faculty)
    b. Departments
    c. Colleges
    d. University (transition to 2025)
2) What are the primary challenges you see for the VPR office/ORSP in the next 5, 10, 15 years?
3) How can the VPR office/ORSP better support your short term efforts to increase extramural funding?
4) How can the VPR office/ORPS help in your intermediate term efforts to conduct Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities, and Discovery (RSCAD) at KSU?
5) How can the VPR office/ORSP support your long term RSCAD strategic efforts to meet your 2025 goals?
6) Other questions, concerns or insights not covered in 1-5.