

RESEARCH FACULTY RETREAT - 2006

WORKING GROUP #5

ASSESS NATIONAL INFLUENCES AND TRENDS ON SCIENTIFIC DIRECTIONS AND FUNDING, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO NIH, AND DISCUSS WAYS WFUSM CAN POSITION ITSELF FOR THE FUTURE. OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER INCLUDE: ROLE OF THE VA AND DIVERSIFYING THE 'RESEARCH PORTFOLIO' (I.E., LESS DEPENDENCE ON NIH FUNDING, ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY/ FUNDRAISING, ETC.) SHOULD ALSO BE DISCUSSED

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The working group focused primarily on ways to diversify the funding base for research. Strategies for diversification include pursuing other federal (non-NIH) funds and the role of philanthropy and fundraising in supporting research at WFU.

It was determined that WFU is heavily reliant on NIH funding. There are many other federal sources of research funds that could be pursued; however, the strategies for applying for these funds differ from NIH approaches. The working group developed recommendations on how WFU could position itself better to apply for these funds.

The working group was educated (briefly) regarding fundraising at WFU. In 2005, \$26 million was raised. The most critical issue identified by the working group that can be addressed with philanthropic donations was the need for endowed chairs and professorships in the basic sciences. Recommendations were developed that will give faculty more interaction with the Development Office, and in establishing the vision for soliciting donations.

Topics that were identified but not covered in the time available were the role of the VA in diversifying the funding base and ways to pursue congressional set-aside funds for research activity.

Details of Workgroup Discussions

1. Diversification of the funding base

The discussion focused primarily upon diversification of our funding base. Several of those present suggested that there may be opportunities to increase our funding from outside the NIH system. Success would require some education of the faculty (and Office of Research) in how to identify and secure these funds. Examples of non-NIH federal funds that we might pursue with appropriate education include (but are not limited to) the Department of Defense, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and Department of Homeland Security.

As shown in the table below, all federal sources comprise 73% (\$106 million) of research funds obtained by WFU in FY 2005. The majority of those funds are NIH (74%). Army, DOD and DARPA funds comprise only 4% of the total federal funds received.

FY 2005 (millions)

	Dollars	Percent
All Federal sources	\$106	73%
NIH	\$78	74%
Army, DOD, DARPA	\$4	4%
Other Federal	\$24	23%
Non-federal	\$39	27%
Total	\$145	100%

Several recommendations were made to diversify our research portfolio:

1. Office of Research identify and educate support personnel who know the specific funding sources and can facilitate (1) the identification of possible funding; and (2) facilitate applications to these funding sources.
 - Office establish a repository of documents (funded grants) to serve as templates for new grants.
 - Office facilitate the assembly of expertise and resources from the basic science pool to form collaborative, translationally-focused teams of investigators that can apply for these grants. (Recognizing that non-NIH funding in the biomedical sciences is focused more on translational research than on basic science).
 - Office educate faculty about non-NIH funding sources and strategies for pursuing these funds (e.g., via workshops, information about the Community of Science database).
2. Prepare a searchable faculty database to include: faculty interests, funding sources of all past/present grant, study section membership. (This activity is thought to be 'low cost – high yield').
3. Identify (fund) a staff member (scientist) from the Office of Research to promote the resources and expertise of the institution to federal funding sources. This scientist would closely monitor the strategic direction of the non-NIH sources of funds as these are less stable and often change with the Administration.

2. Directions in Funding

Another topic that deserves further discussion is the need to educate faculty on the NIH Roadmap. This is thought to be a 'guiding principle' for much of the future in funding medical research. Our size makes us poorly placed to be successful in Roadmap initiatives. Consequently, we need to be creative in how to pursue these funds. Our collaborative culture will work to our benefit.

Recommendation:

- Hold a faculty workshop to discuss Roadmap initiatives to include NIH scientists and WFU scientists.

3. Role of philanthropy/fundraising in research activities

Ms. Audrey Stone met with the group to answer questions about how the Development Office matches needs with gifts. Giving has been relatively flat (approximately \$26 million annually) from 2003-2005. Final numbers on giving for fiscal 2006 will be available this month. Gift designation is always determined by the donor. Unrestricted gifts are spent at the discretion of the President of Health Sciences.

The working group was unanimous in their recommendation that establishing endowments for chairs or professorships in the basic sciences is the most critical need. The timing is important as NIH funds are at reduced levels and these endowments provide salary support. The Development Office provided data to the work group regarding the number of endowed chairs and professorships. There are 21 institutionally funded endowments and 15 donor funded endowments (5 are not yet fully funded), all linked to clinical departments. It was noted that establishing endowments for the basic sciences lacks the same opportunities as clinical medicine (i.e. no patient interaction).

Recommendations:

1. Five endowed chairs (\$2 million each) and five endowed professorships (\$1 million each) should be established as a part of the next WFU Capital Campaign, specifically for the basic sciences.
2. A Faculty Development Committee should be established to meet periodically with Development Office leadership to discuss initiatives and priorities of the faculty and to learn about the philanthropic process at this Medical Center. A Faculty Development Committee can also evaluate the number of endowments to pursue (see recommendation #1 above) and which areas within the basic sciences are most ripe for solicitation (most "endowable").
3. Provide a mechanism (opportunity) for faculty to fund an endowed chair.
4. Create a formal linkage between the Public Relations and Marketing and the Development Office to better highlight the significance and implications of recent basic science research to different segments of the donor community.

4. Congressional set-asides

The working group discussed briefly the opportunity to pursue congressional funds at the state or federal level, usually linked to high profile topics such as poverty, rural health, obesity. The WFU experience with these resources include the building of the nutrition center and the downtown park infrastructure. The Institute of Regenerative Medicine also has some experience obtaining such funds.

Recommendation

- Pursue further discussion of this topic with institutional resources (Joanne Ruhland, VP of Government Relations).

5. Issues identified but not discussed

Expanding our research activities to involve VA populations and VA funding sources.