

December 2008

Dear MSU Faculty and Staff -

Greetings from the Office of Research and Economic Development! I hope that you and your family enjoy the time off during the next week or so. It has been a very interesting couple of months to work at MSU - we have a new university president and a new football coach coming on board - and I feel a collective sense of optimism about our future. Congratulations go out to Coach Sharon Fanning and the women's basketball team - who are off to a perfect 8-0 start as they prepare for SEC competition in January.

Some faculty and staff kudos to pass along -

Dr. Art Cosby and Dr. Sarah Rajala were just named as Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Art is Director of the Social Science Research Center and Sarah is the Dean of the James Worth Bagley College of Engineering.

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) held their annual Marion T. Loftin Banquet earlier this month, and recognized 12 individuals who will be designated as SSRC Research Fellows: Dallas Breen, Emily Broad, Guangqing Chi, Ginger Cross, John Edwards, John Green, Heather Hanna, Wes James, Jeremy Porter, Kathleen Ragsdale, Colleen Sinclair, and Tonya Thornton-Neaves.

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning just distributed their FY 2008 Research Catalog, and Mississippi State University was once again the top research institution in the State in terms of new research funding awards.

The final rankings from this last year are -

1. Mississippi State University - \$151,426,449
2. University of Mississippi/University of Mississippi Med Center - \$100,197,899
3. University of Southern Mississippi - \$90,578,506
4. Jackson State University - \$58,686,785
5. Alcorn State University - \$24,563,364
6. Delta State University - \$10,176,004
7. Mississippi Valley State University - \$9,640,678
8. Mississippi University for Women - \$7,125,046

The total new funding for all IHL Institutions was \$452,394,730 - so, once again nearly half of a billion dollars was brought into the State of Mississippi by university faculty members.

One of the goals that I set out to do this past semester was to address several key issues that arose during our strategic planning process. The first was to identify institutional research strengths. The second was to develop a consistent set of criteria for research faculty and staff promotion. The third was to address the variety of issues that revolve around enhancing research center - academic unit partnerships. As you may remember, we convened working groups that met ([http://www.research.msstate.edu/pdf/colleagues/6\\_08\\_colleagues.pdf](http://www.research.msstate.edu/pdf/colleagues/6_08_colleagues.pdf)) during the summer to develop suggestions on new policies and procedures in these three key areas. During this past semester, I have had the opportunity to visit with different groups on campus (Faculty Senate, Faculty Research Advisory Committee, Vice Presidents, Deans, Department Heads, and Center Directors). My office is very interested in receiving feedback on all three of these topics, and I am very pleased to share with you the summer working group recommendations.

The first group met to discuss research focus areas for MSU. The only good quantitative measure we currently have to identify research strength areas is to use research funding, as we have no institutional database of publications or other research metrics. The five areas suggested by the working group include - (1) Education and Outreach; (2) Food Supply, National Resources, and Health; (3) Simulation and Systems Design; (4) Remote Sensing and Geospatial Information Systems; and (5) Energy and the Environment. During our campus discussions, there have been several comments on this topic. Several people have noted that research funding does not necessarily measure all areas of scholarly excellence on campus - and as such, other measures should be used in addition to funding level. Additionally, several individuals are not sure what is encompassed in "Education and Outreach" - and thus, we may need a different title to reflect these activities. Finally, there have been some feelings expressed that identification of research focus areas is not necessary or even desirable. The entire report (click on the link entitled "ORED Proposed Research Focus Areas") is available on the ORED website at <http://www.research.msstate.edu/personals/schulz.php>

The second group met to discuss promotion procedures for faculty members who hold the rank of Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, or Research Professor. Promotion requests for faculty on research appointments come through ORED or DAFVM, depending on where the research faculty member is working. The major changes suggested include a minimum recommended time-in-rank as well as the inclusion of external letters as part of the promotion packages. There has been a tremendous amount of discussion on how to appropriately modify existing policies and procedures to ensure a uniform set of guidelines for faculty in both ORED and DAFVM. I am working with Dr. Melissa Mixon to ensure that once we receive feedback on these proposed changes, the appropriate parties on campus will submit a single uniform policy for approval and review. The entire report (click on the link entitled "ORED Proposed Research Faculty Promotions") is available on the ORED website at <http://www.research.msstate.edu/personals/schulz.php>

The third group met to discuss overhead sharing between research centers and academic units. My goal is that the topic of overhead sharing should be relatively seamless as faculty members are preparing proposals - so that each of you can focus on writing a good proposal and not

worrying about potential disagreements between department heads and center directors over overhead distribution. This report is longer than the others, and takes a comprehensive look at not just overhead distribution - but also fostering an improved environment for collaborative research on our campus. The entire report (click on the link entitled "ORED Proposed Overhead Distribution Guidelines") is available on the ORED website at <http://www.research.msstate.edu/personals/schulz.php>

So, what are the next steps? Over the next month, I want to hear from you on these three areas. At that point, I will take the suggestions and comments from all of the different meetings we have had, modify the proposals as appropriate, and submit these modified documents for official approval through normal administrative channels. Thus, I would welcome your feedback and suggestions on all three of these critical areas for growing our research and scholarly efforts at Mississippi State. Please send email directly to me at [schulz@research.msstate.edu](mailto:schulz@research.msstate.edu).

I wish you and your family a relaxing and fun-filled holiday!

Go Dawgs!  
Kirk