

April 2007

Greetings from the Office of Research and Economic Development! I hope that all of you had a successful semester, and that you have productive and fun-filled summer.

We have some new folks on board in the Office of Research, and some that are taking on new assignments:

*Cristi Stevens will be serving as my administrative assistant – taking over from Joan Pritchett Bateman who is retiring from Mississippi State this summer. Cristi was previously working in the ORED as an administrative assistant. She can be reached at cstevens@research.msstate.edu.

*Robyn Remotigue is now the Assistant Director for Sponsored Programs Administration. In her new role, she will work with the SPA office to continue to improve our service to the University research community. She can be reached at robyn@spa.msstate.edu

* Jennifer McAllister has joined Sponsored Programs Administration as an Administrator. She will be working with the Dean of Engineering, Center for Computational Science, Southern Rural Development Center, Social Science Research Center, College of Business & Industry, Center for Safety & Health, MS Research Consortium Agreement, and Institute for Clean Energy Technology. Jennifer most recently was Assistant Director of INST. She can be reached at jmccallister@spa.msstate.edu.

*Dr. Patricia Cox has joined the ORED as our new Biosafety Officer. In addition to the duties associated with Biosafety at MSU, Pat will also serve as the Assistant Director of Research Compliance. Pat will be available to assist faculty members with issues related to Biosafety, and can be reached via email at pcox@research.msstate.edu.

*Katherine Crowley has accepted our offer to join ORED as an IRB Assistant Compliance Administrator, which gives us two full time professional staff members to assist with the IRB.

In an earlier email note, I had talked about the need to identify Assistant Directors for many of the support units in ORED, and we have now done this with Sponsored Programs Administration and Research Compliance. These appointments are critical to ensure continuity of leadership, to provide better depth of service, and to allow us to implement cross training in research support infrastructure.

As a member of the Southeastern Conference, Mississippi State is constantly upgrading our athletic facilities and venues to ensure that we are keeping pace with the other institutions in our region. It is important for us to do this so that we can recruit outstanding student athletes and exceptional coaches, and in general run a first-class athletic program. Indeed, if we do not keep pace with the other peer institutions in our

region, we run the risk of falling too far behind – and as such, making us less-competitive on the athletic field.

In my view, we need to look upon our status as a research university in much the same way. If we are to compete nationally in research and scholarly activity, we need to ensure that we have the look and feel of a modern research university. This includes having world-class research laboratories and facilities, outstanding faculty and staff, and exceptional students. In essence, we need to be sure that we have all of the attributes of a research university – and that we continue to seek to place ourselves among the top universities in the country.

So, what are the attributes of a modern, top tier research university? There are a great many different aspects of a university that are critical and necessary components of a first-class research institution. One of these key components in our quest to be recognized as a top tier institution is having a first-class research library.

Like many things in life, libraries are ranked using a wide variety of criteria, including numbers of volumes held, current journals, and library budget. All of these different attributes are considered in determining membership in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). When we talk about attributes of a nationally ranked research institution, membership in ARL is one of the attributes expected of leading research universities.

Membership in ARL is tied to four major areas which include: the breadth and quality of collections and services; the research aspirations and achievements of the institution; the attributes of the library in comparison to peer ARL libraries (including having distinctive national collections of importance to the scholarly community); and the involvement of the library in academic planning at the parent institution.

Interestingly, when ARL looks at institutional research aspirations, it uses the Carnegie Association for the Advancement of Teaching's ranking of universities as the key independent assessment of research achievements. Thus, it will become even more important for Mississippi State to continue to rank as highly as possible in the Carnegie classification system.

Dean Francis Coleman and her staff are currently preparing application materials to have our library recognized as a member of ARL. MSU tried for this designation in 2003, and were not successful at that time, mainly due to financial reasons. However, I believe that we will be successful on our next bid, thanks to a great deal of ground work done by Dean Coleman coupled with additional financial resources from the Office of Research. President Foglesong has made membership in ARL a top university priority, and with the strong support of the central administration, I believe that our library will be appropriately recognized with ARL status.

So, as you enjoy the beautiful weather while walking around campus, and you happen to go by the football stadium and the library, remember that both of these facilities play a

major role in the perception of Mississippi State by the outside world – and both are critical elements in our quest to be recognized as a top tier university – in athletics and academics.

Go Dawgs!

Kirk.